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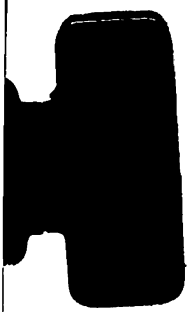

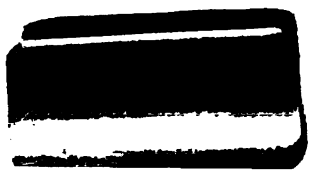

MEMOIRS AND ARTISTIC STUDIES OF ADELAIDE RISTORI

Memoirs of Charming Women

Memoirs and Artistic Studies of Adelaide Ristori,	*Translated by G. Mantellini*
Memoirs of an Arabian Princess,	*Translated by Lionel Strachey*
Memoirs of Madame Vigée Lebrun,	*Translated by Lionel Strachey*
Memoirs of a Contemporary,	*Translated by Lionel Strachey*
Memoirs of the Countess Potocka,	*Translated by Lionel Strachey*
A Belle of the Fifties, being Memoirs of Mrs. Clay of Alabama,	*Put into narrative form by Ada Sterling*
A Southern Girl in '61,	*By Mrs. D. Giraud Wright*
Dixie After the War,	*By Myrta Lockett Avary*

OF
CALIFORNIA

Photograph by Schemboche & Valdi, Roma

ADELAIDE RISTORI AS MARIE ANTOINETTE

Memoirs and Artistic Studies
of
Adelaide Ristori

Rendered into English
By G. Macrone Piers

With [illegible]

Illustrated from
photographs and engravings

New York
Doubleday, Page & Company
1907

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Memoirs and Artistic Studies

OF

Adelaide Ristori

Rendered into English
By G. Mantellini

With Biographical Appendix by L. D. Ventura

Illustrated from photographs and engravings

New York
Doubleday, Page & Company
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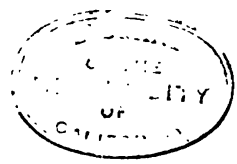

PREFACE

The Marchesa Capranica del Grillo, better known as Adelaide Ristori, died in Rome, Italy, the 9th of October, 1906, aged 84. Her life was full of vivid contrasts; a life which, even apart from its stage aspects, was more than ordinarily full of colour. Her autobiography, I offer rendered into English to the American public, primarily to gratify her own desire expressed in one of her letters addressed to Mr. L. D. Ventura of San Francisco, California, who has graciously volunteered to add some of his Biographical Reminiscences as an Appendix to this work, Madame Ristori says: "My intention is to have my Memoirs published in English. Do you believe that such a book would receive a welcome in the United States?" A woman of amazing personal power, gifted with extraordinary histrionic genius, though possibly never revealing the supreme gifts of inspiration, her early theatrical powers were developed under the best conditions that her native land afforded—she rose steadily into a position of prominence in Italy, and carried the glory of its dramatic art into all the civilised countries.

She became a favourite of sovereigns and all the literary geniuses of her time, not only in her own country, but in the lands she visited.

What a shining example is the life of this illustrious woman who received the highest honours and who experienced the most noble satisfaction, without her ever forgetting or feeling ashamed of her humble origin! "Both my father and my mother were modest dramatic actors," thus she begins her autobiography.

When she reached the age, as she writes, "in which the heart feels the imperious need of other affection than that of art . . ." the Marquis Giuliano Capranica del Grillo fell in love with her and she returned his affection. "After a series of contretemps and of romantic events, our wishes were able to be accomplished." So

she writes, but in these autobiographic notes, the great tragedienne passes over what these contretemps and romantic events were.

Her biographies abound, however, with the particulars of her dramatic love story published during the days of her first triumphs in Paris. Madame Ristori met the one destined to be companion of the best years of her life, in Rome, in 1846, while she was playing at the theatre Capranica, owned by the father of Giuliano. As soon as the young man fell in love, he asked formally for the hand of the actress, but it was not to be expected that the noble family of Capranica would consent to the marriage of the young Marquis with an actress. The noble father formally refused and in order to put an end to this sentimental romance contrived that his son, Giuliano, should be forbidden to leave the Pontifical States, when Adelaide Ristori was called to Florence, by a professional engagement. But Adelaide, as soon as she was able, ran away from Florence, sailed from Leghorn and landed at Civitavecchia where her lover met her at the castle of Santa Severa, in which he had been confined. The old Marquis having been apprised of the flight of Miss Ristori, obtained an order from the Ministry, to send Giuliano to Cesena on a mission. Notwithstanding the difficulties and discomforts of the trip, the two lovers left together, he bound for Cesena, and she for Florence. During this romantic journey, the biographer narrates, they arrived at a small village. It was the hour for the mass service; the church door was open, the priest officiating at the altar. The Marquis Giuliano del Grillo, Miss Ristori and her father entered, knelt down before the altar and asking those present to be witnesses, the two lovers declared that they wanted to be made husband and wife. It seems that in those times such a hasty form of marriage was perfectly legal. The loving couple had, however, to separate at the frontier. Giuliano went to Cesena and Adelaide to Florence. The young husband could not bear long the cruel separation. Disguising himself as a truck-driver, and buying a passport from a dancing-master, for which he paid 800 scudi, he crossed the frontier of the Pontifical

Adelaide Ristori: la perfezione, nell'arte, e nella vita.

Eleonora Duse.

ELEONORA DUSE

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States, and arrived at Florence in the evening. Without being noticed, he went behind the scenes of the theatre where his beloved bride was playing, and she coming off the stage covered with flowers and applause, found him hidden behind the paraphernalia. The little romance had, however, a happy ending, owing to the interference of the mother of Giuliano, who had recognised the superior moral qualities of the actress; and also owing to the advice of Cardinal Pecca. The marriage was regularly celebrated in 1847.

During her travels around the world Ristori never forgot to be an Italian, and never neglected to circulate through the people of foreign countries sympathy for Italy, which was at that time divided and under tyrannical rule. Count Cavour, was one of her friends and admirers from the time of her first appearance. At Turin in the Theatre Carignano, where Ristori was playing, there was a foyer for the actors, and conspicuous politicians would occasionally go there. One of the most assiduous of these frequenters was Count Cavour, of whom Madame Ristori used to tell this anecdote. She read once in some of the papers of the opposition, some atrocious words against his policy and also against his person. She was astonished that Cavour was not annoyed, but he broke into laughter, and said, "Let those fools of newspapers say what they want, I don't mind them; on the contrary, they amuse me."

The public, in order to love the artist, must be loved. And Ristori loved it up to her death. Can anyone imagine in our days that the Prime Minister of either France or Italy should write to Sarah Bernhardt or to Madame Duse the famous letter that Cavour wrote to Madame Ristori in 1861? "Do use that authority of yours for the benefit of your country, and I will not only applaud in you the first actress of Europe, but also the most efficacious coöperator of our diplomatic negotiations."

Could anyone imagine a deputation of citizens who would go to see Duse or Bernhardt, before the beginning of one of their performances, and ask her to intercede with King or President to obtain pardon for a soldier

sentenced to death? That happened in Spain, as mentioned in these "Memoirs," and the pardoned soldier, by the name of Chapado, up to a few years ago, would write to Madame Ristori, calling her "my darling mother!"

Madame Ristori knew that times have changed, and during the last winter evenings of her life, when she received friends in her palace situated in the heart of the old part of Rome, after having related with regal discretion and simplicity some anecdote of her past glory, she would fall back in her armchair and speak about the modern drama and the distracted audiences of to-day. If anyone told her that the modern theatre was sceptical and common because the audiences wanted it to be so, she would answer with her sonorous voice, raising her beautiful, statuesque head under its white widow's crêpe:

"The audience is what the actor makes it!"

G. MANTELLINI

COUNT CAMILLO BENSO CAVOUR
Great Italian Statesman of the XIX century.
(1810–1861)

Photograph by A. Durandi, Italy

VICTOR EMANUEL II, KING OF ITALY
Called " Il Re Galantuomo."
(1820–1878)

INTRODUCTION

The proverb which compares human life to a journey seems to have been invented purposely for me. My life has glided through continuous, long journeyings, that I might bring my art to the consideration of all peoples. In many countries it has been my privilege to perform the leading rôles in various immortal works. I have observed that expression of human passion excites intense sensations in every race and clime.

I may also add that in the vocation I have chosen, I have exercised my artistic conscience often by overtaxing my physical strength, endeavouring always to enter into the nature of the character I had to represent by studying the customs of the times and by making historical researches. This I did in order to represent the physical and moral personalities of my characters, whose manifestations were gentle at times, at times terrible, but always great. The applause with which the most select audiences honoured me was certainly an adequate return for my sincere efforts, but I must add that the highest satisfaction came to me from having succeeded in identifying myself with the characters which I represented and from having become inspired by their passions. Many times I left the stage with contracted nerves, overcome by fatigue and emotion, but always happy in my success, for I adored my art.

Thinking perhaps that it may not prove unprofitable to those interested in this art to follow the daily struggle of an artist with the part which she had to play, I have resolved to give a faithful account of mine without minimising either its enthusiasms or its disillusions, its joys or its sorrows. I shall mention almost day by day the principal episodes of my artistic career, being grateful for the kind receptions I have always met, receptions which have constantly upheld me, and to which I owe the perseverance and the courage that have led me to success.

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MEMOIRS OF ADELAIDE RISTORI

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CHAPTER I

MY FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE INSIDE OF A BASKET—MY SECOND AND MEMORABLE DÉBUT AT THE AGE OF THREE—MY FIRST PERFORMANCE AS "ENFANT PRODIGE"—RAPID ADVANCEMENT—AT THE AGE OF FOURTEEN I AM INTRUSTED WITH THE RÔLE OF LEADING LADY—I JOIN THE ROYAL DRAMATIC COMPANY—NERVOUS RESTLESSNESS—SOME CONSIDERATION OF DRAMATIC ART IN THE FIRST PART OF THE LAST CENTURY

Both my father and mother were modest dramatic artists; it was naturally my fate then to dedicate myself to their art; and, as if it had been decreed by Heaven that such should be my destiny, it happened that my parents wished me to experience the emotion of the stage from my birth.

I was hardly three months old, when a babe in swaddling clothes was needed one evening for the performance of a little farce called "The New Year's Presents." The stage manager, taking advantage of the good opportunity which provided a new-born babe for his company, caused me to make my début upon the stage, with the consent of my mother.

The argument of the play was a most simple and puerile one. A young lady, whose father had forbidden her to love the very young man to whom she had given her heart, unites herself clandestinely in wedlock with him, and has a child.

Not having the courage to reveal this terrible act to her inexorable father, she decides to confide, as is customary, in a good old servant of the house, who, moved to compassion by the grief of these two unfortunates, promises to help them in obtaining the paternal forgiveness, and invents, for this purpose, a very comic stratagem.

Then, as now, it was the custom to send presents to

one's acquaintances on New Year's day. In small provincial towns, landowners and owners of dwellings were considered the princes of the locality, and their tenants competed with one another in offering presents to their landlords—their best fruits, their largest chickens, and most beautiful eggs.

The good servant conceives of the plan of putting inside of a large basket of eggs, fruits, and chickens, the poor little baby of his young mistress, not however, without having taken the necessary precautions, that the babe should not be smothered or crushed. He then has the basket carried to his master. The climax is thus prepared for.

All the family of the landlord and the guests of the New Year's dinner crowd around the basket, which has just been carried in, to admire its contents. At the rear of the group shines the comic figure of the old servant, wearing a smiling and quizzical countenance, rubbing his hands, and awaiting patiently the result of his beautiful scheme.

The master of the house opens the basket. With great satisfaction he begins to take out and examine the different gifts, first, the chickens—then, the eggs—then, the fruit—but, alas! It seems that the new fragrance, too excessive for a three months' little nose, had distressed me, and before the time, I begin to yell, "Huaa! Huaa!" —Who cannot picture that startling climax?

A general stupor arose!

The dumfounded father takes a step backward! The good old servant, without much ado, lifts the child from the basket and places it in the arms of the embarrassed grandfather. The surrounding guests are bewildered, while the two young parents attempt to justify themselves. But my crying at that moment grew to such a pitch that, between the uproarious laughter and the great noise that the audience was making in the pit, my shrieking voice drowned everything that the actors were saying. They had to carry me hurriedly to my mamma's dressing-room to give me—that alone which would quiet me at such a time.

My lungs never belied the splendid promise given by me from the miraculous basket. This first and famous event

of my infancy was later a constant source of joy to my good mother, who shook with laughter every time she told me of the incident.

I made my second appearance at the age of three. They were representing an old drama entitled "Bianca e Fernando," written by a lawyer of Avelloni. Time, the Middle Ages. I had to take the part of a little son of a châtelaine, a widow, who is ardently in love with a gentle knight; but the high dignitary to whom her dying husband has intrusted his wife and who is invested with supreme power over the lands, is also a rival for her hand. This villain, angry at the continued and very sharp refusals of the beautiful widow, sets up a furious quarrel when he learns her firm resolution to unite herself at any cost only with the man of her choice. The partisans of the contending parties are about to come to blows, when the young châtelaine, leaving her child for an instant, attempts to interpose and stop the fight. Then the villain throws himself upon the child, seizes him, and threatens to kill him if the mother does not yield to his own desires. In vain they try to tear me from the arms of that man. The cries of the poor mother reach the sky.

These insane shouts frightened me; the play became for me a reality. I began to weep and to shake myself, torturing with my little hands the face of the ugly villain, by pulling his whiskers and scratching him until he let me go. At last I succeeded in slipping away from his arms, crying aloud: "He hurts me! Mama! Mama! He hurts me!" My little legs began to run like a rabbit's and the attempts of the actors to hold me back were unsuccessful. They finally found me hidden behind the skirts of my mother, while the audience were laughing so that they were compelled to drop the curtain.

Those who have a mania for investigating the tendencies of children from the age when they begin to put words together, and who make prophecies as to their future life—what would they have said of me after this escapade? That the stage would prove odious to me, that I never could take tragic parts, nor look upon brandishing swords or poignards—nevertheless I had to

dedicate myself to tragedy, and swords and poignards became for me familiar instruments!

At the age of four and a half, they made me recite in little farces in which they intrusted to me the principal part. Do not accuse me of a lack of modesty if, out of respect for truth, I mention in these memoirs the good profits that the manager realised from my appearance upon the stage.

Noticing that I was so much liked by the public, and understanding that I was forming an essential part of our small company, I began to take up the tone and the ruses of an adult. I remember at that time it was customary for the most loquacious and popular actor of the company, during the intermission before the last act of the evening, to come before the footlights and announce to the audience the performance for the following night, mentioning which actor or actress would play the principal part in the production. And according to the interest which the audience showed for the actor announced, one could hear a murmur of approbation, or even applause.

The members of the company would remain behind the curtain listening with interest to this manifestation of the audience. Naturally, I also had my ambitious curiosity and, when they announced that the short play that would come at the end of the performance would be assigned "with particular care" to the little Ristori, and the audience broke into applause, all approached me to congratulate me. Then I would move out between the wings, my tiny hands in the pockets of my little apron, nodding my head, shrugging my shoulders, and saying in a vexed tone of voice, "What a bother to have to recite always—always!" But in my heart, I was jubilant.

At the age of ten, I was intrusted with the parts of small servants who were summoned to carry or hand letters—a very easy task. The stage manager would make me rehearse many times lest I should appear awkward, too familiar, or too stiff.

When twelve years old, I was booked with the famous actor and manager, Giuseppe Moncalvo, for the rôles of a child. Soon after, owing to my slender figure, they made

me up as a little woman, giving me small parts as maid. But they soon made up their minds that I was not fitted for such parts. Having reached the age of thirteen and developed in my figure, I was assigned several parts as second lady! In those days they could not be too particular in small companies. At the age of fourteen, I had to recite the first part among the young girls and that of the leading lady alternately, like an experienced actress. It was about this time, in the city of Novara (Piedmont), that I recited for the first time the "Francesca da Rimini" of Silvio Pellico. Though I was only fifteen, my success was such that soon afterward they offered me the parts of leading lady with encouragement of advancement.

My good father, who was gifted with a great deal of sense, did not allow his head to be turned by such offers. Reflecting that my health might suffer from being thrown so early into the difficulties of stage life he refused these offers and accepted a more modest place, as *ingénue*, in the Royal Company, under the auspices of the King of Sardinia and stationed during several months of the year at Turin. It was managed by the leading man, the most intelligent and capable among the stage managers of the time. The advice of this cultured, though severe man, rendered his management noteworthy and sought after as essential to the making of a good actor.

Among the members of the company shone the foremost beacon-lights of Italian art, such as Vestri, Madame Marchionni, Romagnoli, Righetti, and many others who were quoted as examples of dramatic art, as well as Pasta, Malibran, Rubini, and Tamburini in the lyric art.

My engagement for the part of *ingénue* was to have lasted three years, but, after the year, I was promoted to the parts of the first lady, and in the third year, to the absolute leading lady.

To such unhoped-for and flattering results I was able to attain, by ascending step by step through the encouragement and admonition of my excellent teacher, Madame Carlotta Marchionni, a distinguished actress and the interest of Gaetano Bazzi who also had great affection for me. It was really then that my artistic education began. It was then that I acquired the knowledge and

the rules which placed me in a position to discern the characteristics of a true artist. I learned to distinguish and to delineate the comic and the dramatic passions. My temperament caused me to incline greatly toward the tender and the gentle. However, in the tragic parts, my vigour increased. I learned to portray transitions for the sake of fusing the different contrasts; a capital but difficult study of detail, tedious at times, but of the greatest importance. The lamentations in a part where two extreme and opposing passions are at play, are like those which in painting are called "chiaro-oscuro," a blending of the tones, which thus portrays truth devoid of artifice.

In order to succeed in this intent, it is necessary to take as model the great culture of art, and also to be gifted with a well-tempered and artistic nature. And these are not to be confined to sterile imitation, but are for the purpose of accumulating the rich material of dramatic erudition, so that one may present oneself before the audiences as an original and artistic individuality.

Some people think that distinction of birth and a perfect education will render them capable of appearing upon the stage with the same facility and nonchalance with which one enters a ball-room, and they are not at all timid about walking upon the boards, presuming that they can do it as well as an actor who has been raised upon them. A great error!

One of the greatest difficulties that they meet is in not knowing how to walk upon a stage, which, owing to the slight inclination in construction, easily causes the feet to totter, particularly if one is a beginner, and especially at the entrances and exits. I myself encountered this difficulty. Though I had dedicated myself to the art from my infancy and had been instructed with the greatest care every day of my life by my grandmother, at the age of fifteen my movements had not yet acquired all the ease and naturalness necessary to make me feel at home upon the stage, and certain sudden turns always frightened me.

When I began my artistic apprenticeship, the use of diction was given great importance, as a means of judging an actor. At that time the audience was critical and severe.

In our days, the same audience has become less exacting, less critical, and does not aim to improve the artist, by counting his defects. According to my opinion, the old system was best, as it is not in excessive indulgence and solely by considering the good qualities, without correcting the bad ones, that real artists are made.

It is also my conviction that a person who wishes to dedicate himself to the stage should not begin his career with parts of great importance, either comic, dramatic, or tragic. The interpretation becomes too difficult for a beginner and may harm his future career: first, the discouragement over the difficulties that he meets; secondly, an excessive vanity caused by the appreciation with which the public apparently honours him. Both these sentiments will lead the actor, in a short time, to neglect his study. On the other hand, by taking several parts, he becomes familiar with the means of rendering his part natural, thus convincing himself that by representing correctly characters of little importance, he will be given more important ones later on. Thus it will come about that his study will be more careful.

But let me return to my narrative.

By the year 1840, my reputation as absolute leading lady was established. I had reached the desired goal, not without having struggled against the greatest obstacles. But I was in love with my art, and it was by meeting obstacles that I was gaining new strength.

Fatigue never discouraged me. So great was my passion for the stage that when my manager granted me an evening's rest for the sake of saving my strength and also with the cunning object of causing the public to desire my presence the more, I felt like a fish out of water. I did my best to take advantage of that free evening by employing it in the study of some new and difficult part. I applied myself to it passionately, with the greatest possible enthusiasm; but when the hour of the performance struck, a sort of restlessness would take hold of me which I wasn't able to quiet. I seemed to hear the first notes of the orchestra, the impatient murmur of the audience and the exhilarating uproar of the applause. Then I would walk up and down the room with long

strides, endeavouring to distract my mind, and repeating from memory some lines which I had studied—but in vain! Irritated by not succeeding in accomplishing anything, I would suddenly enter my mother's room, exclaiming, "Shall we go to the theatre to spend an hour?" "Let us go," she would answer, "if you cannot keep away from it!" Quickly we would don our wraps and hats, and be off. Having reached the theatre, I was often overcome by my gay humour, and would think of all sorts of pranks to play upon my fellow actors. I remember on one of those evenings, they were playing "Le Memorie del Diavolo," in which many masqueraders appeared at a certain moment of the play. The caprice seized me to go upon the stage among the supernumeraries as a surprise to the leading man. It was useless to attempt to dissuade me from that roguish trick. To don a domino and cover my face with a half-mask was but the matter of a minute. I went on the stage with the supernumeraries. At the stroke of twelve, they all had to unmask. You may imagine what ugly looks the leading man gave me, upon noticing my presence. But I was motionless, suppressing my laughter and not at all discountenanced. The audience, having noticed the joke, broke into loud applause. Observing that my fellow actor was getting angry I hid myself among the supernumeraries standing around me and succeeded in withdrawing from the eyes of all. Asking forgiveness from my good companion—which I readily obtained—I convinced him that I had entered into that escapade in fun.

However, my mood was not always gay. Often I was downcast by inexplicable sadness which, lying like a piece of lead upon my heart, filled my mind with sad thoughts. I think that this strange uneasiness of temperament was to be attributed entirely to the excessive emotions which I experienced when playing certain passionate parts.

I interpreted so realistically the parts I took that even my health became affected. One evening when I was playing "Adrienne Lecouvreur," the tension of nerves and mind during that last act of delirious passion was so great that when the curtain dropped at the end of the drama, I was assailed by a sort of nervous attack, and

experienced in my brain a drowsiness, so that I lost consciousness for a period of fifty minutes.

When I was under the influence of similar emotions, a sense of melancholia would take hold of me. Then I would love a walk to the cemetery. I would remain a long time within that peaceful enclosure, stopping from time to time to read the inscriptions over the various tombs, and I was moved to pity, even to tears, if I came upon the tomb of a young girl taken in the bloom of life from desolate parents, an adoring husband, or from her children, and I would return home with my spirit extremely grieved. Often as soon as I had arrived in a new town and visited the picture and sculpture galleries, I contrived to obtain permission to visit the insane asylum. When it was not the cemetery, it was there that the impulse of the moment would carry me. Demented young girls were those who attracted my sympathy, and if their sad, tranquil forms of insanity permitted me to enter their cells, I would entertain myself with them; and they had a special love for me, making me the confidante of their sacred griefs! It is true that very often I heard the same old story—Treachery! Abandonment!

With the passing of years, I succeeded in outgrowing such eccentricities. By mastering my nerves, I freed myself from those romantic ideas and nothing could distract me from my studies.

The condition of dramatic art in Italy, particularly at that time, did not permit the run of representations in the different cities to exceed habitually thirty or forty days. Rarely did the performances run for two months in succession. By these frequent changes, the public derived great advantages. It was not necessary to possess a varied répertoire, and the public had no time to accustom itself to the actors, to the detriment of their enthusiasm. Thus I had before me frequently a new public easily moved at my will and which, owing to the magnetic current promptly established between ourselves (a condition very necessary for me), could communicate to me those sparks which complete the artist, and without which any study brings an impression of aridity and deficiency.

The years of my youth rolled by in the pursuit of my professional career while my love for learning never grew any less. On the contrary, while advancing in age I was greatly improving in my artistic vocation. That nature had designed me for the dramatic art, I could feel from the eager desire urging me to observe and acquire all that was shown to me, through my professional peregrinations. Music, painting, and sculpture had always had for me a fascinating attractiveness. I will quote an example. One night in Florence, being worn out with fatigue owing to several successive performances, I was longing for a day of rest. However, such a welcome relief did not suit the manager of the Cocomero Theatre, Signor Somigli, who was not inclined to interrupt the profitable run of the performances of "Pia de' Tolomei," which had met with great public favour, and swelled the cash receipts.

The greedy manager called to his assistance his brother, who remembered a desire which I had previously expressed and conceived the idea of striking me in my vulnerable spot. Coming to me, he said, "Please do play again to-morrow night and you will get a fine present."

"I don't care for your presents," I answered laughing.

"Still," he added; "if you knew! . . . Do you remember that beautiful drawing of the façade of our famous San Miniato al Monte, you so much admired when in my house? If you will play, it is yours."

I could not resist and accepted. The management made another big cash receipt, while I played a whole evening for a drawing.

. . . . . .

Even at present, I am pleased to recollect the will-power that I always exercised, both as a young girl and as a woman, and the wise suggestions of my illustrious teacher, Madame Carlotta Marchionni.

Whenever I went upon the stage, the fear with which the audience inspired me, would not abandon me for a

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VIEW OF FLORENCE TAKEN FROM SAN MINIATO

how thorny the path which I had to tread must be if I was to succeed, as I eventually did.

The reader will be surprised to read the analytic review which I make further on of that difficult task and of the painful struggle that it cost me.

CHAPTER II

MY MARRIAGE—MY CHILDREN—DRAMATIC AND LYRIC PLAYS—AMENITIES OF THE THEATRICAL CENSURE—MY SHORT WITHDRAWAL TO PRIVATE LIFE—MY PROFESSIONAL TRIP TO PARIS IN 1855—MY RELATIONS WITH RACHEL

I HAD reached the age when the heart feels the imperious need of another love besides the one for art. The affection that I nourished for children in general, was not only inborn but extraordinary with me, and I fancied that children alone were destined to make one realise true happiness on earth. Still I could not decide to marry, lest this might endanger my professional career, with which I was infatuated. However, the fates had destined for me a companion, a gentle soul, who, sharing with me a love for my art, instead of lessening my enthusiasm encouraged me to pursue my vocation with tenacity.

After a series of grave difficulties and romantic adventures, already told by my biographers, I united myself in matrimony with the Marquis Giuliano Capranica del Grillo.

Painful circumstances obliged us, during the first years of our married life, to live separated. Still the days of bliss and comfort soon came for us. I had the sublime good fortune to become the mother of four children. Unfortunately two of them died. The two remaining ones, Giorgio and Bianca, were destined to make up for the emptiness, which the death of their two poor brothers had caused.

We never wished to be separated from them; so they grew up under our very eyes, and were for us a source of great joy.

Little by little, however, I began to perceive that the

first sweetness of maternal affection was taking such hold upon me, that my love for my art was gradually decreasing in its intensity. The abnormal state of my mind joined together with secondary reasons, prompted me to retire from the stage, when hardly three years had elapsed since my last contract with the Royal Sardinian Company.

Though the list of the plays of our company was very select, and included the productions of our greatest and most celebrated authors, such as Alfieri, Goldoni, Niccolini, Monti, Pellico, Carlo Marenco, Nota, Giacometti, Ferrari, Gherardi del Testa, Leopoldo Marenco, Fortis, Castelvecchio, and many more worthy of being mentioned in this galaxy of stars; still we could not compete with the lyric art!

For the benefit of the opera or the ballet, the theatrical academies lavished immense sums of money. A great spectacular show was quite an event. All was sacrified for that purpose, while the neglected dramatic art, entirely set aside, had to make herculean efforts to keep alive.

The melodious Muse only was enjoying the public favour.

During the first years of my career, so great was the enthusiasm for French plays, which had become more fashionable than our own, that if the management wanted to make sure of a crowded house for several consecutive performances, it was necessary to announce a play of Scribe, Dumas, Legouvé, Malesville, etc., etc. It was not that the plays of our national authors did not meet the public favour, as their artistic value was beyond question, but granting their due literary merit, they lacked the French spontaneity, *mise en scène*, and purity of language. The audience, with rare exceptions, did become enthusiastic over a play of the Italian school.

However, the decadence of our drama was mainly due to the harm done to it by the Austrian and Pontifical censure, the two powers which governed Italy at that period.

Patriotic subjects were absolutely forbidden. Moral plays were so disguised that they turned into farcical

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PIUS IX., COUNT GIOVANNI MARIA MASTAI FERRETTI
Pope from 1846–1878

parodies. The plays were mutilated to a mass of contradictions, being at times rendered completely silly and bereft of any interest.

I will give you an idea of the nonsensical changes, which were enforced particularly by the ecclesiastic censor of those times.

A doctor had to say: "I have cured him of a dangerous illness," and the censor considered it profane to mention on the stage a word which designated the head of a parish! Neither was it permitted to mention the word God, or angel, or devil. The actor could not be called Gregorius, the pope at that time being Gregorius XVI., or by the name of John and Pius, during the reign of Pope John Mastai, Pius IX.

To utter the word "Fatherland," was considered blasphemy! One day a play was presented to the censor, whose principal character was a deaf-mute, who was returning home after a long exile. In the book were the necessary annotations indicating what the actor should express by gestures. Among these there was this one: "Here this actor must express the joy which he experiences in beholding his fatherland—" Well then, the censor erased the word "fatherland" and substituted "native land"! Just as if the audience could by means of the gestures, discern the difference!

Another time, in Rome, they wished to perform "Macbeth," in which one of the witches says: "Here I have a pilot's thumb wrecked as homeward he did come!" The censor erases this whole sentence. "Why?" asks the manager. "Don't you think," answers the censor, "that the audience will see in that sentence an allusion to the boat of St. Peter, which owing to the wickedness of the times, is about to be wrecked?"

In the face of such absurdities no good reasoning can hold!

The same absurd censure was exercised with the librettos of the operas. In Verdi's opera, "Luisa Miller," in the beautiful romance of the tenor, there are the following words:

"While she with angelic utterance:
'Thee alone, will I love!' was saying. . . .

That word "angelic," hurt the nerves of the censor, who substituted for it: "armonic!" This change excited the hilarity of the gallery and a humorous fellow amused himself by writing under the name of a street situated near St. Peter in Rome, called Via Porta Angelica, "Via Porta Armonica."

Once when in Rome, they were going to produce the opera of the immortal Bellini, "Norma," the censor did not allow its production until the following modifications had been made: First, that the title of "Norma," should be changed to "The Forest of Irminsul," to remove the allusion in the word "norma," which appears in many Italian prayer-books; second: that the two sons of the priestess should become her own brothers; thirdly, that her condemnation to die upon the pyre should be the result of having compromised herself with the Roman pagans. And in the famous final scene, before ascending the pyre, instead of commending her children to her father "Oroveso," she had to commend them to the Druids, saying: "Let them not be the victims, etc., etc., . . . "

In Verona, the Austrian imperial censor has not yet been forgotten who in a piece of poetry containing the phrase: "Beautiful sky of Italy," substituted: "Beautiful sky of the world!" And many more striking examples could be mentioned.

With such a state of affairs how could the Italian theatre prosper? How could it excite and keep alive the pulses of the public? As these were lacking, I was like a body without a soul! I felt paralysed under an unbearable yoke, which controlled my gestures and my words. It was not enough for me to know that the audience honoured me with sincere, unmovable, true and constant affection and sympathy. I had grown accustomed to interpret the part of the character I represented, to live those few hours with the artistic life of the play, and when the latter, badly conceived or outrageously mutilated, could no longer excite those enthusiasms, no longer cause those electric currents which stir up and transport an audience, and transform and raise the artist to a paroxysm of delirium, I felt that I

was tumbling down from the supreme height of my aspirations. The applause granted for myself alone, seemed to be cold, and an invading sadness overwhelmed my heart.

And thus it happened, that in Turin, at the time mentioned at the beginning of these Memoirs, I decided suddenly to retire from the footlights, as it appeared to me that by entering the quietness of domestic life, I should find the realisation of my most beautiful dream.

However, such a resolution was only of short duration. The sacred fire of my art was only smothered, not extinguished, and the proof of this was in my twice touring professionally the world.

Still, in spite of the decision to leave my home and country, my mind was preoccupied. My object was to vindicate abroad the true artistic genius of the Italian stage, and to show that Italy is not only the "Land of the Dead."

But how could I succeed in carrying out my plan? Like a flash of lightning, the bold project of an artistic tour to France, sprang from the bottom of my heart. Unfortunately the experience which in the spring of 1830, another dramatic company, directed by the celebrated actors Luigi Taddei and Carolina Iternari, had undergone, was not very encouraging. However, they could attribute their failure to the terrible revolutionary events of that time and to the flight of their protectress the Duchess de Berry, who followed the king, Charles X, in his exile.

Everything seemed to foretell that our project should be crowned with great success. I informed my husband of my plan, which he approved immediately. We came to the conclusion that the Royal Sardinian Company was a worthy representative of Italian art.

The principal artists were the celebrated Ernesto Rossi, Gaetano Gattinelli, Bellotti-Bon, Mesdames Cultini-Mancini, Righetti, Boccomini, and others. The purpose of trying to compete with the French actors, whose perfection in playing the drama is not equalled by those of any other nation, was very remote from my mind. I wished merely to demonstrate to those rabid Gallophiles,

who praised to the skies the merits of the French actors, to the detriment of the Italian, that in Italy also, we know what real art is, as well as how to interpret it worthily.

We held counsel with our intimate friend Signor Alessandro Malvano, whose intelligence we could trust. He found our project an excellent one. Being thus encouraged by him, we spoke to our leading man, Signor Righetti. Upon hearing us he was aghast, and not only began by calling my ideas chimerical, but ended by opposing absolutely the project which was to bring to realisation "the fancy of my phantasy," as he called it. He enumerated the risks, the unavoidable losses we might meet, the probability of our artistic failure. Signor Malvano then stepped in, declaring himself to be persuaded of the success and ready to assume all its responsibilities, adding: "If there should be any loss, I will stand it; if any profit, it will be yours."

Besides my salary, I was to receive a percentage of the gross receipts. At last in order to put an end to the hesitation and fears, we proposed to him that, in case the company should sustain a loss, I should share with him my part of the profits. This proposition and the convincing arguments, with which we were inspired by our good faith in the success of our undertaking, won Signor Righetti to our side.

My engagement was to expire shortly. In Italy the engagements of dramatic actors begin with the first day of the Carnival season and end with the last day of Lent.

The necessary preparations were made; and we decided to start the first of the coming month of May, in the year 1855, and it was at the same time announced in Paris that we would give our first performance on the 22d of the same month. We agreed upon the various plays to be performed. Our first care was to select productions which would not cause comparison with those played by the French actors. We knew that tragedy was the field upon which we could best muster ourselves, and we feared no comparison with the Italian dramas.

We chose for the first performance the tragedy of Silvio Pellico, "Francesca da Rimini," and a farce in one

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FRANCESCA DA RIMINI

Act V, Scene 1—" . . . La bocca mi bacio tutto tremante . . . "—Dante's "Inferno," Canto V

act called "I Gelosi Fortunati," by the Roman author Signor Giraud. I also was taking a part in that short play, representing a young bride very much in love and very jealous of her husband. The passing from the tragic to the comic in the same evening, we reckoned, would make an impression upon the French audience.

Prior to leaving home, I was supplied with some letters of introduction, among which I had one to the critic Jules Janin and to Signor Angelo Fiorentino, who contributed so much to the success of our undertaking.

We left Italy with our hearts filled with great hopes. The trip began auspiciously. We saw for the first time that handsome and picturesque section of France. The swollen and impetuous torrents excited our admiration. Their winding through the fields and forests gave to the country a grand aspect, almost terrifying.

A small number of our friends joined us, owing their love for dramatic art to certain friendly ties, which coming down from father to son, bound them to the artists of the Royal Company. In their youthful enthusiasm, they wished to share with us all the anxieties, all the joys, of the risky undertaking, with every hope of witnessing our triumph.

We arrived in Paris by night. My apartment had been secured in advance. It was situated in the Rue Richelieu, No. 36, near the Molière fountain. Since then, every time I pass that house, the most pleasant remembrances awaken in me.

The rest of the troupe found accommodations in two modest hotels located near the "Théâtre Italien."

Together with my husband and our friends, I started immediately to see the famous boulevards. At the sight of that throng of people, some busy and some idle, gesticulating nervously, or walking indifferently, I was astounded! To find myself in this universal centre frightened me! We entered the "Café Véron," in order not to miss anything of that spectacle so new to us—and ordered some chocolate to be served outside on the boulevard. Thus we could enjoy the most interesting phantasmography. So great was the impression of that animated life, that not hearing, in the midst of that

Babylon, a single word of our language, I was filled with a sense of deep sadness.

We returned home without saying a word. I did not dare to speak, either to my husband, or to my friends, of the discouragement which I felt, and as one may easily guess, I passed a very restless night.

The following days I was somewhat distracted by the preparations for our first performance. I found some comfort in the faith in our attempt, which was evinced by the numberless Italian political exiles, then in Paris. Alas! the greater number of these people will never read these Memoirs! Manin, Montanelli, Musolino, Carini, the editor of the *Revue Franco-Italienne*, who became later a general in our army, Dall' Ongaro, Ballanti, Toffoli, an old colleague of Tommaseo, Dr. Maestri-Federici, Sirtori, Angelo Fiorentino, the General Galletti, as well as others who deserved much from their country, exist no more. . . . Allow me to place a wreath of friendship upon their tombs!

Together with our young Turinese friends we desired to attend some of the theatres. We were all very anxious to hear the famous tragedienne Madame Rachel, who had filled the world with her fame. With great regret, we learned that she was no longer playing in Paris at that time. She had previously taken a leave of absence for a trip to the United States. The Parisians were angry at her, and she resided out of the city.

Not being able to see Rachel, who was the main object of our curiosity, we had to satisfy ourselves with a performance of the "Comédie Française," so celebrated for the care it took in staging its productions, deserving the first place in Europe. Even without the great tragedienne, a visit to the Comédie, was the "desideratum" of every tourist who came to Paris. We had no time to lose, in order to give ourselves the pleasure of attending a performance at the "Maison de Molière," as our season was to begin on the 22d and it was already the 17th. We saw on the programme the name of Mlle. Augustine Brohan, greatly renowned for her animation and comic talent. She was playing that evening one of her favourite creations, "Le Caprice," by Alfred de Musset. Though very

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FOUNTAIN OF MOLIÈRE IN PARIS
House on the right, where Madame Ristori lived in 1855

much worried about our coming début, still we wished to attend that performance, but we had not had the time to engage our tickets ahead. A few moments before the performance was to begin, we walked leisurely to the ticket office and asked: "*Une loge?* "*Une loge!*" exclaimed the employee, looking at us curiously. "*Une loge pour ce soir? Vous n'êtes pas pressés! Pourquoi n'êtes-vous pas venus huit jours plus tard?*" However he had pity for our embarrassment and generously offered us tickets for "le paradis!" My husband hesitated, but our young friends with their customary good humour, were ready to accept. For my part, I was not very willing to make my first appearance in the House of Molière in that way. Still, we had no choice. . . . After consulting each other a moment, we laughingly ascended the five stories and took triumphant possession of our seats, in the upper gallery. From that height, we could applaud with the usual Italian enthusiasm. Mlle. Brohan's exquisite way of playing gave us all great pleasure, and I took away the impression of a perfect evening.

Previous to beginning my performance, I took my letter of introduction to Mr. and Mrs. Jules Janin. As the latter was closely bound by friendly ties with Mme. Rachel, I asked of him the favour of an introduction. I was anxious to know personally so great a celebrity and also to ask of her, as a fellow tragedienne, her moral support in my attempt. My ardent desire could not be granted. Mme. Rachel was in her villa. I wished to write her, but was dissuaded by Mr. Janin and by others, who assured me that the famous artist was about to come to the city, and thus I would have every opportunity to meet her. With a nervous and impressionable character like that of Mme. Rachel, such a step from me, might have caused the opposite of my desired purpose. Writing her without the formality of an introduction, was almost dealing with her as an equal, and she had good reason to consider herself in an exceptionally privileged position. It was like trying to teach her a lesson in manners, what the laws of hospitality would have suggested to the mistress of the house to do for a stranger, who was about to cross her threshold.

I allowed myself to be convinced by those arguments, though they seemed to be rather subtle and puerile, and later in my life, I repented my docility.

On the appointed night, we began our series of performances as previously announced. The impression we produced upon the French audience was rather a satisfaction to our pride. The press was unanimously favourable, and we obtained the approbation of the greatest number of renowned critics. The famous scene in the 3d act, in which Paolo and Francesca reveal their love to each other, was much applauded, and Francesca's death, which does not offer to the artists so good an opportunity to draw great dramatic effects as to excite strong emotions in the audience, inspired the great Dumas to write a very flattering article for my benefit.

The impartial appreciation of the press was due to such critics as Alexandre Dumas, who afterward became such a good friend of mine, Jules Janin, Théophile Gautier, Jules de Premory, Paul de St. Victor, Léon Gozlan, Merry, Théodore Anne, and many others, who all were very kind to me.

Some among the devotees of Rachel timidly granted that I had facility in tragedy and agreed that I possessed, to a greater extent than Rachel, flexibility of voice, but claimed that I lacked the necessary vigour to interpret properly violent passions. They affirmed that I lacked plastic classicism of movements in my poses, the carriage of a goddess, which the great Rachel possessed as she crossed the stage wrapped in the *peblum*.

I might have bowed my head under that judgment and acknowledged that nature had denied me those gifts, which the sympathy, indulgence, and loving interest of my countrymen had recognised in me, but a verdict, so quickly pronounced, was somewhat suspicious. To mention energy, strength, and violence in connection with the sweet and pathetic character of Francesca, was nonsense. It revealed their deliberate intention of opposing me at any cost and of prejudicing the public at once, without giving time to reflect or compare, or even the chance to express liberally its own opinion. That verdict might have excited my pride, rather than have awakened

ALFRED DE MUSSET IN 1854

French poet. Great admirer of Madame Ristori, to whom he dedicated a poem calling her "La Force unie a la Beauté"

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in me the honest sentiment of modesty, but pride was not indeed my failing. Those precocious criticisms vexed me, because they showed me that my appearance upon the French stage, was, by some people, ill-interpreted.

Whenever I had a chance, I told both my most intimate friends and most severe critics, that I never had the presumption to come to Paris for the purpose of competing with their own sublime actress. My object was more modest and more generous. I only wished to show that in Italy also, the dramatic art—which has for centuries been its pride, and its glory—was still alive and considered a passionate and superior cult. As to myself, let them wait until they had seen me act the various parts of my repertoire, and given proof of my ability. Then if they insisted upon making comparisons, which I could not control and was unable to avoid, let them show their impartiality and serenity of mind, reserving their criticisms for a part that afforded a reasonable foundation for justifiable comparison. The tragedy of "Myrrha," might, for instance, be compared with that of "Phædra." This analytic comparison forms one of the principal studies comprised in these pages.

The third performance, including a double bill, viz.: "Un Curioso Accidente" and "La Locandiera," both of the immortal Goldoni, we produced on the 26th. The rôle of Mirandolina was one of my favourites. In interpreting that character, I have endeavoured to adopt the Goldonian style. One should understand the coquettish of that school, as it is very different from the present. The colouring must absolutely bend toward the conventional naturalness, which creates the principal impression of the Goldonian characters. The "cunning" Locandiera, is not like the "Flatterer" of Nota, a "Celimène" of our own times; and the character of Mme. Aramante, in the "False Confidenze" of Mariveau, has nothing to do with a flirt of the modern French school. The rôle of Mirandolina was one of the chief rôles which gladdened my artistic career, owing to the passion that I experienced in playing the above-mentioned comedy of Goldoni.

I should like to have the actress who performs it now, take notice of my remarks. I venture to make this

suggestion not out of vanity, but with the desire to see this art interpreted according to the times and the different school to which it belongs.

The Locandiera was very much liked by the Parisians, although the comic style in a foreign language was not of easy comprehension.

We then resolved to produce "Myrrha" by Alfieri, but owing to a lack of time, it had not been sufficiently announced to stir up the curiosity of the public. However, the house was more crowded than ever before, and all the representatives of the press were present. This tragedy, revealing the pure and severe Italian style, with distinct Greek form, gave me an opportunity to demonstrate my artistic ability and the profound psychological study I had made of the part. It also proved that our Italian school knows how to ally the Greek plasticism with the natural spontaneity in reading the lines, while being entirely freed from academic conventionalities. It must be granted that academic teaching does not lack praiseworthy qualities, but we argue that in its portrayal of passion, one should not bear in mind the extent and the rules for raising an arm or a finger. Provided that the gestures are noble and not discordant with the expressed sentiment, one can allow the actor all his spontaneity. Hesitation and conventionality are apt, according to my humble opinion, to hide the truth.

One of the greatest of the living examples of this school of realism is my illustrious fellow artist, Signor Tommaso Salvini, with whom, for a number of years, I had the fortune to share the fatigues and the honours of the profession, which I also shared with Ernesto Rossi. The former was and is still admired. His rare dramatic merits have nothing of the conventional, but owe their power to that spontaneity which is the most convincing revelation of art. The wealth of plasticity which Salvini possesses, is in him a natural gift. Salvini is the true exponent of the Italian dramatic art.

Returning to my performance of "Myrrha," I will say its success surpassed all our expectations. At the end of the fourth act—which is so masterly conceived by the great Alfieri—the entire audience seemed to be delirious.

Courtesy of Charles L. Ritzmann, New York

ADELAIDE RISTORI AS SUOR TERESA

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The foyer of the theatre was invaded by celebrated literary authorities and artists of all kind. Alexandre Dumas was kissing my mantle and my hands. Janin, Legouvé, Scribe, Théophile Gautier, and many other actors and playwrights joined their enthusiasm to that of my compatriots, reaching almost a paroxysm!

In the fifth act, during the famous scene between Myrrha and Cinyras, her father (the latter part being interpreted with exceptional ability by Rossi), the audience never stopped their applause, their shouts and their admiration.

The tremendous success of that tragedy in Paris, compensated me with usury, for my hard and strenuous study in learning to interpret, in a worthy manner, that most difficult part of Myrrha.

From the short analysis that I make further on one can easily imagine how difficult a task it was!

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CHAPTER III

MY SUCCESS IN THE TRAGEDY OF "MYRRHA"—I ATTEND A PERFORMANCE OF MADAME RACHEL—THE ARTISTIC VALUE OF THIS GREAT TRAGEDIENNE—NEW ATTEMPTS BY MUTUAL FRIENDS TO BRING ME NEAR TO MADAME RACHEL

THE evening on which we performed the tragedy of "Myrrha," we won the sympathy of those also who had not shown themselves very favourable to us after hearing the "Francesca da Rimini."

In order to give the other actors of our company a chance to distinguish themselves, we soon afterward produced some of the plays in which they could display their special talents.

On the 31st, we produced "Il Burbero Benefico," by Goldoni, and "Il Niente di Male," by F. A. Bon. On the 2d of June, "La Suonatrice d'Arpa," by David Chiassone and "Mio Cugino" by Angelo Brofferio.

The day on which we were to play "Il Burbero Benefico," I was informed to my great surprise and regret, that Madame Rachel had not only returned to the city, but had purchased a box for the performance of that evening. I felt very much grieved about it! If, after the uproar aroused by the papers, it was the intention of the great Parisian artist to come over to criticise me, she certainly had chosen a poor performance upon which to base her criticism! "Il Burbero Benefico" is certainly one of the best plays of Goldoni, but the rôle of the leading lady finds itself relegated to a secondary place, almost to a shadow, in order to bring out more conspicuously the personality and the character of the leading man. In interpreting the rôle of Mme. Delancour, I could not fully bring into evidence my artistic qualities; I could not display the amount of my intelligence, as I might have done in interpreting the very difficult part of "Myrrha."

The step that Madame Rachel had taken caused me still another embarrassment. . . . Her having, unbeknown to me, rented a box at our theatre, revealed clearly her wish to keep herself aloof and to maintain her incognito. Could I, within the limits of my dignity, put myself forward and introduce myself to her, offer her a box, and thus in a certain way, deny her freedom of judging me at her own pleasure? It was a matter of delicacy, of decorum and, in the meantime, of artistic pride. If I had wished to invite Rachel to attend one of my performances, I should have preferred to have her see me in the rôle of Myrrha, or Mary Stuart, or Francesca da Rimini. But I did not wish to appear over-anxious. It seemed as if she wanted to see me as an actress, before greeting me as a guest.

The following day I ran into my friends Mr. and Mrs. Jules Janin, to whom I had expressed my regret at what had happened. They quieted me and reassured me, and added that if I had presented Mme. Rachel with a box for my coming important performance, she would certainly not have refused the invitation. In the meanwhile they would try to see her very soon, and arrange for a dinner party to bring us together.

During that time, we were none too well satisfied with the financial results of our undertaking, and Signor Righetti, our leading man, did not spare me his reproaches, nor did he show any scruples in making me responsible for what he called his own ruin.

We were very much preoccupied with the thought of preventing this sort of a failure. Our common friends quieted and reassured us, by saying that if I were able to get another large audience and repeat the success of "Myrrha," we could easily draw still larger ones.

On Tuesday, June the 5th, "Myrrha" was repeated. After the enthusiastic criticism of the press, the audience filled the house, while the success of the performance surpassed all expectations. After that night, they wished for nothing but "Myrrha." The financial and artistic success was now totally assured. The tragedy continued to be repeated until we produced "Mary Stuart." The press unanimously followed the ovation of the

audience. Both the analysis and the appreciation resulted in being rather unfavourable to Rachel. To this significant verdict of the press, was added the accusation that the celebrated tragedienne had received with ingratitude the great love that the Parisian audience had always borne for her, adoring her as a Muse, as one of their own creations. Whether such charges were justifiable or not, I was unable to judge, but with such a state of affairs, it was no longer tactful for me to invite her to come and hear me. She might have supposed that I wanted her to be a witness of my triumph. . . . Thus, I abstained from inviting her, and won the approbation of my friends, Janin, Ary Scheffer and others whom I had consulted. On the other hand, Rachel's friends who at first bade defiance to my success, now tried to paralyse it, fearing that it might hurt Rachel and eclipse the radiance of her aureole . . . it was truly a mistake even to suppose it.

When, owing to the unexpected return of Rachel to the stage, I had the opportunity of hearing her, on the evening of June 6th, in the rôle of Camille in "Les Horaces," my conviction was more than ever confirmed.

Mr. Arsene Houssaye had kindly offered me a box in the name of the Comédie Française, of which he was then the general manager, so that I could attend that solemn performance which coincided with the anniversary of the death of the great Corneille.

As soon as Rachel made her appearance on the stage, I understood at once the power of her fascination. She looked like a Roman statue! her majestic carriage, her regal bearing, the folds of her mantle, everything was presented with admirable artistic skill. Perhaps the critics might have taken exception to the stiffness of the folds of her skirt, which were never disarranged. It is easy for me, as a woman, to comprehend the reasons for this. . . . Rachel was very thin and was using every method to conceal it. But how admirably she did do it! She possessed modulation of voice, to a high degree—at times she was fascinating. In the stupendous culminating scene, where we have the imprecation against Rome and the Romans, she uttered such

accents of hatred, of rage, that the whole audience was frightened. I had—without any hesitation—confirmed the verdict passed by all Europe upon the eminent qualities which had gained for Rachel her glorious fame. She not only possessed genius for the stage, power of forceful expression, nobility of features, reality and nobility of pose; she also knew how to enter into the life of the character that she represented, and she held herself in it from the beginning to the end of the play, without neglecting any details, producing majestically all of its great effects, and giving scrupulous attention even to the least noticeable. It is only by attaining such exactitude that one may be proclaimed a great artist.

I could only feel, hear and see her, and I paid tribute to her with my most frantic applause. How well I appreciated, after that evening, the impartial criticism which declared that there existed between us no points of comparison derogatory to either one.

We were following two totally opposite ways; we had two different manners of expression. She could inflame an audience with her outbursts, though academic, so beautiful was her diction, so stately her acting. In the most passionate situations, her expressions, her poses, everything was regulated by the rules of the traditional French school; nevertheless the power of her voice, the fascination of her looks were such that one had to admire and applaud her.

We Italians, in playing tragedy, do not admit that in culminating points of passion, the body should remain in repose; and in fact, when one is struck either with a sudden grief or joy, is it not a natural instinct to carry one's hands to the head? Well then, in the Italian school, we maintain that one of the principal objects in reciting is to portray life and reality, what nature shows us.

What grieved me was the knowledge that every attempt which had been made by my friends to bring me near to Rachel had failed, and that it was owing to the resolution of the fanatical admirers of the French tragdienne, to keep us apart one from the other. Unfortunately one can always find over-zealous persons, ready with untrue gossip, to restrain relations! These took

pleasure in leading people to make Rachel believe that I spoke with envy of her. Others tried to tell me that Rachel in her bursts of professional jealousy made disparaging remarks about me; they even went so far as to endeavour to persuade me that Mme. Rachel, wishing to attend a performance of "Myrrha," had gone to the theatre dressed in such a way that she could not be recognised; and in order to avoid the remarks and comments of the curious had kept herself in the rear of the "bagnoire"; that after the fourth act, which as I have already mentioned, was the culminating point of my rôle, when the audience was bursting into applause, she, not being able to restrain her rage, tore the book of the play which she held in her hands, exclaiming: "*Cette femme me fait mal, je n'en peux plus* (this woman hurts me, I can not stand her any longer)," and resolutely left the theatre, in spite of the attempts of the people who escorted her to hold her back. I never placed any faith in such talk, and I tried my best to calm the excitement of Rachel's friends by proving to them that her great merit raised her above the instability of public opinion, and that my success could not belittle, in the least, the greatness of her talent.

My performances went on with the increasing favour of the public. The outbursts of applause with which I was greeted when I made my entrance upon the stage, were as welcome to me as the profound silence which followed. How great an inspiration is the silence of the audience! When I happened to represent subjects of the greatest importance before an audience accustomed to accord to art a fervent worship, ready to assimilate the passions which are reproduced, I might even say, an audience whose heart beat with the very palpitations of the character which moved it, all this intoxicated me, caused me to feel my power redoubled, I would find suddenly some inspiration, some effect, which I had never studied, but which was more realistic, more vivid than before.

The predominating sensation was one of legitimate pride, in the knowledge that I held within myself the prolific inspiration of my art.

"Mary Stuart" of Schiller, translated into Italian with

RACHEL (ÉLISA RACHEL FÉLIX), IN 1856. (1821–1858)

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splendid verses by Andrea Maffei, concluded my successful season in Paris. I alternated the series of the performances of "Mary Stuart," with "Pia de' Tolomei." I cannot say that the latter met the success of either "Mary Stuart" or "Myrrha," however, it succeeded in impressing the public. Besides, in a literary way, it afforded a special interest, as being inspired by the famous verses of Dante. Our much-renowned tragedian, Signor Carlo Marenco, knew how to lift the action of the last act and bring it to such a climax that the heart-rending impression of the final scene, would bring the development of the subject to a supreme culmination.

The criticism, analysing the preceding acts, may have been severe, but it was obliged to pay its tribute of tears to her who says:

> "I once was Pia, Sienna gave me life,
> Maremma took it from me. That he knows,
> Who me with jewell'd ring had first espous'd."
> (*Dante, Purgatory, Canto V, Verse* 131.)

The death of Pia in the fifth act of the play, had cost me great study, as I wished to reproduce faithfully the spasms of the agony and the last death struggle of a young woman, imprisoned at the request of an unjustly cruel husband, in a castle surrounded by the pestiferous swamps of the Maremma. Such an end troubled me. How was I to express upon the stage, with perfect truth, the lugubrious picture of a long agony? Just at this time, a most extraordinary event caused me to witness, in spite of myself, the last moments of an unfortunate woman who was dying of malarial fever. This desolating scene fixed itself so profoundly upon my mind, that while it assisted me in reproducing faithfully the heart-rending death of Pia, portrayed as a matter of fact the poor woman I had seen die, and at every performance, the painful scene thus recalled, would appear and trouble me profoundly.

After six performances of this tragedy we had to reproduce "Myrrha" and "Mary Stuart." At this period, one may say the Italian drama had become established in Paris. The ones who sided with the great tragedienne Rachel, could not console themselves; and the attacks

against me were kept up unceasingly. It was, therefore, to my great astonishment that I received one day from one of Rachel's partisans an invitation to a banquet in the home of a literary man, where I should at last meet Mme. Rachel. My husband, after having run over the list of names of the invited guests, did not deem it advisable for me to accept and we found a plausible pretext to refuse the invitation.

Time was gliding along, and I no longer thought of the possibility of meeting Mme. Rachel, when one morning they announced to me that Mme. Ode, the famous dressmaker of the Empress Eugenie, wished to speak to me on a matter of importance. I thought at first, that it was regarding some of my costumes, she being also my dressmaker.

"I come on a mission from Mme. Rachel!"

"From Mme. Rachel?" I inquired surprised.

"Yes, Madame, and I hope you will render my mission an easy one." Mme. Ode, noticing my astonishment more and more, stated her errand without any further preambles.

"You must have heard," resumed Mme. Ode, "how much Mme. Rachel feels the attacks to which she is a victim, attacks which you have called forth. You perhaps, are ignorant of the fact that they have tried to embitter her against you, assuring her that you did not speak of her with all the consideration that she deserves."

"It isn't true," I answered, "and I hoped that Mme. Rachel had not believed such malignant insinuations, any more than I did, though several unkind remarks which she had made about me were repeated to me. I went to hear her in "Les Horaces," and did not try to conceal the enthusiasm that she awakened in me. I asked some common friends to assure her of my admiration, and my great desire to meet her personally, but all the attempts that have been made to bring us together have been of no avail! . . . So let us speak no more about it."

"And if I were to tell you, my dear lady, that Rachel expressed her desire to meet you?"

"If such is the case, let her come to me and she will be received as a person so celebrated as she should be."

But noticing that my reply did not meet with the approval of Mme. Ode, and that she was trying to make me understand that it was for me to take the first step, I felt it my duty to answer her: "I do not think it is my part to make the effort made by my friends at my request, when I first came to Paris, and was eagerly desirous of meeting her. I repeat to you, let us not say anything more about it."

"But if Mme. Rachel should offer you a box for her play, would you accept it?"

"I would with the greatest pleasure, and would break any other previous engagement, rather than deprive myself of such a joy."

In fact, the following day I received a letter enclosing an order for a box at the Comédie Française, and a card reading: "To Madame Ristori from her fellow-tragedienne Rachel," a card which I still jealously preserve.

On the appointed night, I was seated in my box when the performance was about to begin. They were playing "Phædra." My desire to see Rachel in that masterpiece of Racine was indescribable, especially as that was one of the rôles of my repertory, and one which had necessitated my most serious study. Although I had noticed that the spectators kept their eyes upon me, it was not on that account that my applause was lavished upon Rachel. I found her person very stately; her first entrance on the stage magnificent. However, the prostration which she showed seemed to me quite excessive, and moreover, she neglected to portray clearly that this prostration was only due to moral languour, which disappears when its intensity is removed, and allows the body to resume its vigour.

Entirely majestic and marvellous the scene of the second act, with Hyppolitus, where Rachel, as Phædra reveals her passion to him. . . . but in that situation, though contrary to her custom, she exaggerated perhaps the impetus of too expressive realism. In the fourth act, Rachel was purely sublime, and the admiration and irresistible emotion she excited in me, were so great that I felt truly moved. I only regret that I had to express my enthusiasm simply in applause!

When the curtain fell, with my heart overflowing with artistic sentiment, I wrote a few lines upon one of my visiting cards, which I had sent to Rachel in her dressing-room! After that I had no further relations with her. The reader will see later on, what conception I myself formed regarding the interpretation of that tragedy.

CHAPTER IV

FAREWELL TO PARIS—THE SIX FRANCS OF ALEXANDRE DUMAS—READY WIT UPON THE STAGE—SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMAS—AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT WHICH HAPPENED TO ME IN NAPLES—I OBTAIN THE PARDON FOR A MAN SENTENCED TO DEATH, IN SPAIN—TOUCHING GRATEFULNESS OF THE UNFORTUNATE MAN

At the end of my stay in Paris, I had received several proposals to devote myself entirely to the French theatre. No one could have prevailed upon me to renounce playing in Italian. I always expressed my absolute refusal, alleging as a pretext, the great difficulty of acquiring perfection in the French accent. It was then that Minister Fould insisted upon my accepting the proposition, in the name of the Emperor, offering me a year in Paris at the expense of State, in order that I might overcome this difficulty under the direction of distinguished professors, and afterward fill the place left vacant by Rachel, at the Comédie Française, which she was soon to leave. I stuck to my refusal, not without thanking the Minister for the honourable offer, and adding that a great artist, could not renounce the applauses of the Parisians, who in their turn, could not renounce their admiration for their favourite actress. However, my refusal did not anger the Minister at all, for with much good grace, he granted me the favour I asked him, and that was to allow me for three consecutive years, the use of the "Salle Ventadour," in order to produce there, a series of Italian dramatic performances.

In this way, not only had I the great satisfaction of having reached the object upon which I had fixed my mind, that is, appreciation of the Italian art by other nations, but I also opened up a new source of profits for the numerous Italian artists in both Europe and America, and thus brought honour to our country.

It was with great regret tha
had the opportunity to meet a
distinguished members of Fr
the lights of that great wor
carried away with me the dea
artine, Georges Sand, Guizot,
Scheffer, Halévy, Janin, L
Gautier, Reginé, Samson, M
Mmes. Madeleine and Aug
others the mention of who
long.

I had to say goodbye to all
leave of that excellent Ale
almost daily to our home, b
haustible wit. How many
together!

How delightful it was to l
lific and prodigious vivacity!
intimate anecdotes of his pri
torn from the memories whi
books. We gazed at him in
to him, and we took good ca
to hear him even now, rela
coming out from a performan
with measured steps throu
(he was then in the first stage
he met an intimate friend of

"What do you think about

"About what?"

"About Mme. Ristori! Di
theatre?"

"I never have heard her."

"Aren't you ashamed? an
thus crushing his friend with
brusquely left him there, say
you again until you have see

Some days later when he
at the corner of the Rue de
filled with the same idea.

"Well, in what performanc

"Oh, leave me alone! One

and I am not reduced as yet to the
uer.'"
rancs? Here they are; and you will

walking away hurriedly and bored,
le sum of six francs upon the edge
he curb crying: "If you don't want
llow who sees them will get them,"
e corner. But after walking a few
ed and said to himself: "After all,
rtune! . . . I can soon return
f left there, anyone who sees them
ecile has placed them there, I will
" And after this logical reflection,
around. . . . To his great
of the sidewalk, he found himself
nas, who had, on his side made the
. . Seeing each other, they both
ugh and the stubborn friend prom-
to hear me play.
funny adventure. Dumas himself
ed to write it later on and call it:
s."
eclared that he would challenge any
re macaroni in the Neapolitan style,
. Owing to our exclamation of
sed to prove it the next day. We
t the "Hôtel de Bade," Boulevard
eparations made by the *chef* of the
all. The windows were filled with
us people who had come to see the
the "Three Guardsmen," with the
ly hair, and regulation white jacket
frying pan in his hand, forgetting
he had reaped, amid the cares which
the cooking of a dish of macaroni!
niscence, I close the narrative of our

nd triumphant I left Paris, after
, what I may call "the baptism of
eople had demonstrated to me that

for them there exists no limit in art. I shall always hold in the depth of my heart a sense of profound gratitude for the generous reception which they gave to a foreigner.

Our company went afterward to Belgium, not without having given a few performances during a long trip in the North of France. At last, we went to Dresden and to Berlin receiving everywhere the most flattering reception.

The following November, I returned to my dear country to end my engagement with the Sardinian Company, giving performances both in Milan and in Turin. Having been asked to go to Vienna to play at the Karttheater, an old Imperial theatre—I first made short stays at Verona, Udine and Trieste. Seeing me again, the Italian public scarcely knew how to show its gratefulness to me for having succeeded in causing Italian art to be appreciated in foreign countries.

I presented myself for the first time on the 14th of February 1856 at the Austrian capital with a company managed and directed by myself. My début was made in "Myrrha" of Alfieri. A more enthusiastic reception than the one which met me from the Viennese audience, I could not have hoped for. For all of my performances, the house was jammed with spectators, and some members of the Court always honoured me with their presence. I experienced a most touching emotion at the first performance of "Mary Stuart," as I knew to what lofty comparisons I should be subjected and also what enormous publicity and importance had been given to that production. My nerves were shaken and a sort of agitation took possession of me.

At last, at the usual hour, I arrive at the theatre, I enter my dressing-room, in full possession of all my wits, and, with an ill-concealed nervousness, I prepare to dress. The excessive heat of the stoves, of which there were a great number in the theatre, begin to annoy me—to make the blood rise to the head, and to inflame my vocal organs. I feel as if my heart will burst, and fear some serious consequence. Little by little my voice grows hoarse —in time, it totally disappears. . . . Without reflecting, while my maid and the property-man hurry to find the doctor of the theatre, I throw open the window

looking over an empty lot in the city, and, without minding the intense cold of the season—it was the 17th of February—and neglecting the sad consequences which might result from such imprudence, I open the vest I have on, and expose my chest to the freezing temperature. If a reaction can be produced it may restore my voice and thus enable me to play the tragedy.

The doctor, surprising me in that attitude, believed that I had lost my senses!—"My voice, Doctor, my voice, for pity sake!" He answered that if I had the courage to gargle my throat with a strong remedy, which he gave in similar cases to famous singers, perhaps I could use my voice sufficiently to play and would not have to send the audience home.

"Give me poison, if necessary; if only I can play!" If that remedy was not poison it was bitter enough to have been.

I did not recover my voice entirely, but after a warning to the audience to be indulgent, I was able to play "Mary Stuart," and with an unhoped-for success.

This anecdote may prove how strong was my sense of duty. I cannot describe how the audience frightened me! Since my youth respect and fear for the public had been inculcated in me, so that I accustomed myself never to give in; and, for that very reason, I made a special study of being ready to substitute immediately, with other words, those which another actor might forget, so that the performance would not appear poorly prepared.

One evening when I had to put into practice this maxim, was when I was playing "Judith," a biblical tragedy which had been written expressly for me by Paolo Giacometti.

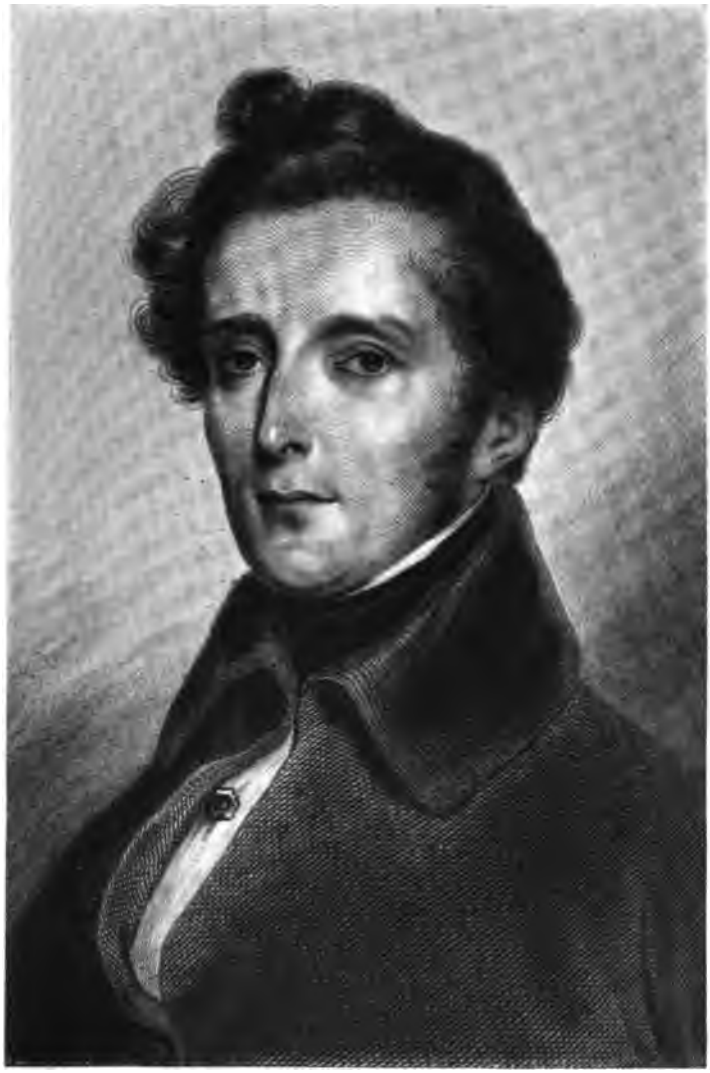
In the culminating situation of the play, after Holofernes's head has been cut off, his favourite slave, Arzaele, discovers the murder of her lover, throws herself furiously upon me, while I seize the head and fling her to the ground, ending the scene with a great effect. Suddenly I was informed from behind the wings, that the actress who was going to play the part of Arzaele, had been taken with an attack of convulsions and that she was unable to appear. Immediately I turned to some of the other actresses: "One of you put on the dress of Arzaele, place

a veil over your head, and run to me." My order was executed with striking rapidity—notwithstanding that the poor girl who was substituting did not know her part! I did not lose my wits—with dexterity I drew her to me . . . as if she were trying to kill me and found a way for her little dialogue between us—May the Lord forgive me for such lines! The audience did not notice anything and the result was splendid.

Once when I was playing "Medea" I had to put to use my familiarity with the stage. Whenever in a foreign city I had to give a single performance, I always chose this tragedy of Legouvé. As we had only one child in our company, and two are needed in playing "Medea," the property-man or the leading man had to provide the other child, who did not have to speak. I was often obliged between the acts to instruct the latter about his gestures.

Once it happened that one of these children, not being accustomed to the stage, became frightened when I appeared from the mountain. Hearing the outburst of applause with which I was received, seeing for the first time the footlights and all the crowd in the theatre, he began to whine, to move and try to free himself from my arms! What force I had to make without losing control of myself, or falling from the mountain to begin my part endeavouring at the same time to make the little fellow understand and be quiet as he had nothing to fear! Often, either the mother, the sister or the father of one of these little fellows would be forced to remain in the wings and make signs or talk to him in a loud tone in order to quiet and assure him that there wasn't any danger.

One evening I had a most unpleasant experience at the end of the tragedy. At the crucial point, when I see myself attacked by the Corinthians, I run in despair across the stage, dragging my two children from one side to another, mingling my cries with those of the people pursuing me. At last, not finding any other escape, I hasten to the steps of the altar of Saturn where I throw the two children, pretending to kill them, then covering them with my body, I remain motionless! The supernumerary child began to scream and run away to the



ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE

A renowned French lyric poet (1790–1868). Great admirer of Madame Ristori's dramatic art. In 1855 he composed a poem dedicated to Madame Ristori calling her "La Gloire et L'Immortalité"

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wings, without my being able to hold him back! And the audience should have supposed him dead! . . . Although the audience was impressed with this remarkable tragic scene, it would not refrain from laughing at the sight of that little dead body running away.

In the month of April 1856 I returned to Paris, as had been arranged the previous year with Monsieur Legouvé. We immediately started our preparations to produce "Medea." In the analytic study of this play, which is one among the six that I had selected from my repertoire, the reader will find a narrative of the most minute, interesting and curious circumstances relative to this drama, be it as far as concerning my part, the *mis-en-scène*, and regarding the tremendous success which it met the evening of April 8th.

From Paris we moved to London. On the 4th of June, my first performance of "Medea" was given at the Lyceum Theatre.

The English public was already favourably impressed by the French, German and Belgian papers, and I was received with immense enthusiasm. My audiences were very large, favouring me with the most flattering demonstration of affection and esteem.

Several among the English literary people reproached me for not including "Macbeth" in my répertoire, the master work, according to my opinion, of the immortal Shakespeare. I gave as an excuse, that a foreign company could not very well produce such a play, for lack of the necessary scenery and of the indispensable number of artists for such a play. They told me that in England they would cut down many parts and adapt the production not only to the ability and number of players of the different companies, but also to the taste and requirements of the public, which had not always a right conception of the times, places and conditions under which the Shakespearean theatre had its growth.

"That I should cripple Shakespeare and commit such a sacrilege! It was impossible! We Italians, never would dare to mutilate our classics; think if I should dare to mutilate the work of your great poet. . . . " They

replied that they did it without any scruple and with the intention of rendering it comprehensible to all. To speak truly, their logic was not far wrong, but that was not sufficient to convince me. Then they proposed to assume themselves all responsibility, and sure enough, upon my return to London, in the month of June, 1857, we began to rehearse "Macbeth," at Covent Garden. It had been arranged for our company by Mr. Clarke, and translated into most beautiful Italian verse by Giulio Carcano. The renowned Mr. Harris put it on the stage according to English traditions. The representation of the part of Lady Macbeth, which afterward became one of my favourite rôles, preoccupied me greatly, as I knew only too well what kind of comparisons would be made. The remembrance of the marvellous creation of that character as given by the famous Mrs. Siddons and the traditional criticisms of the press, might have rendered the public very severe and difficult to please.

I used all my ability of interpretation to reveal and transmit the most minute intentions of the author. To the English audience, it seemed that I had really incarnated that perfidious but great character of Lady Macbeth, in a way that surpassed all expectations.

We had to repeat the drama for several evenings, always producing a most profound impression upon the minds of the audience, particularly in the grand sleep-walking scene. So thoroughly had I entered into the nature of Lady Macbeth, that during the entire scene my pupils were motionless in their orbit, causing me to shed tears. To this enforced immobility of the eye, I owe the weakening of my eyesight. From the analytical study which I shall give of this diabolical character, the reader can form for himself an idea of how much its interpretation cost me (particularly in the final culminating scene), in my endeavour to get the right intonation of the voice and the true expression of the physiognomy.

On November the 7th I went to Warsaw. I can easily affirm that my performances in that city resulted very successfully, but I must admit that such results were facilitated by the sympathy of the elegant and kind ladies of Polish society. There I was favoured also with

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

A noted French novelist and poet (1811–1872). In one of his "Revues Dramatiques" in the "Moniteur" he wrote: "Le genre humain ne peut que gagner à entendre la Ristori . . . "

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delicate attentions from the Governor, from the Prince Gorgiakoff, as well as from the Princess, his wife. Such kind manifestations encouraged me to return there in 1858.

At the beginning of 1857 I visited, for the first time, the beautiful city of Naples, where on the evening of June 14th, at the Regio Teatro del Fondo, I began with "Medea," a short series of my performances.

What an enthusiastic public I found! Little by little as there was established between us a kind of magnetic current, I was transported with delight at their admiration.

It was with great difficulty that I received from the rigorous Bourbons, the permission to perform "Phædra" by Racine. I held it as certain, that in spite of the many mutilations, the many beautiful things of the drama must produce a vivid impression. The result could not have been more satisfactory. During my short season of fifteen performances, I was compelled to repeat "Phædra" five times, a thing that happened very seldom at that time. The last performance was given for my special benefit. Several days ahead all the seats had been sold. A large part of the ladies of the best society, had, owing to the lack of boxes, secured orchestra chairs; a thing which is not very customary for ladies to do in Italy. A "cantata" composed for the occasion had been prepared in my honour. The theatre was like a garden, such was the abundance of flowers, which were sent to me, and what an inspiration it gave to my artistic temperament! . . . However, this splendid remembrance was associated with a most unfortunate incident.

During the great scene of the fourth act, when, owing to jealous rage, Phædra breaks into such a pitch of delirium, I had so thoroughly entered the part, just there, that instead of moving backward while saying: "among martyrs my soul expires," I advanced toward the footlights and fell over! A loud shout came from the audience! A young gentleman who was occupying a seat very near the stage, noticing that the actress playing the part of Œnone was remaining stupidly motionless with fright, rose from his seat and pushed me backward, thus saving me from a great danger. He could not, however, prevent

my being badly hurt from that fall. One of the glass globes of the footlights, which broke under the weight of my right arm, caused a deep wound. This unfortunate incident makes me think of an old Italian adage that: "All that comes to harm does not happen to hurt," for if the Neapolitan Government had not had the strange idea of enforcing the use of oil in the place of gas, (*) fearing political attempts at mischief, my accident would have been much more severe.

The stage was soon invaded by a crowd of people anxious to know how badly I was hurt. Among the first who came to me, was the Count of Siracusa, brother of King Ferdinand, who had with him the Court physician. When my wound was dressed, those around me said, that I was the victim of this deplorable accident owing to the presence in the audience of a well-known *jettatore* (a man with the evil eye). The Count of Siracusa, who was fully convinced of the fact, took from his watch-chain a falcon's claw set in gold, and offered it to me saying: "I have killed this beast myself, carry this with you as a charm against all the *jettatore* of the future." And I always carry this remembrance with me.

The audience left the theatre, the victims of the most vivid emotion.

I was taken to the hotel, and for two long months I had to carry my arm in a sling. This did not prevent me, however, owing to certain engagements I had made, from playing though I had to take care to moderate the movements of my arm. The ill-fated accident left a wide scar.

I went to Madrid, in Spain, the same year, giving a series of performances at the theatre called "Zarzuela."

On the 16th of September I commenced my season with "Medea." Owing to the natural enthusiasm of the Madrilenians, I obtained all that an actress may aspire to. The house was always crowded. Queen Isabelle, a woman gifted with true artistic sentiment, always attended my performances, sat in her royal box, did not miss a

*The Neapolitan Government, in consequence of an explosion which had happened on a war vessel, had suppressed the use of gas in all public buildings.

gesture, nor a glance of the actors and broke on every occasion, into enthusiastic exclamations.

A few evenings later when I was obliged to repeat "Medea," a most touching incident happened to me, and the remembrance of it I have carried in my mind and in my heart.

I went to the theatre at the usual hour. In front of the dressing-rooms there was a nice reception hall. While my maid was getting my wardrobe ready, a most interesting conversation was started between the other actors and myself about the magnificent and interesting historical wonders we had seen during the few days of our sojourn in Madrid and about the traditions and customs of that proud country, which astonish so much anyone who visits it for the first time.

"By the way" I said, "what was the meaning of that ringing of a bell through the streets to-day, by a man belonging to some religious fraternity?" I was answered that it was in order to collect some alms for the suffering soul of a man sentenced to death, by name Nicolas Chapado. The unfortunate fellow was a soldier, who, in an impulse of wrath, had drawn his sword against his sergeant, who had struck him. Furthermore, I learned that his sister who was ignorant of the affair happened to be in the street and seeing the member of the Fraternity of Saint John the Baptist gathering up alms, she asked for the name of the poor fellow condemned to be shot the next day. "Nicolas Chapado," she was told. Hearing that name she fell, as if dead, to the ground. That story filled me with the greatest sadness.

"My Lord!" I exclaimed, "while we are here standing filled with merriment, triumphing and receiving applause, that unfortunate fellow counts the minutes which still remain for him on earth!" With my heart full of pity I went to my dressing-room. Soon after, two persons asked to speak to me. "The lady is dressing," they were told. Seeing that it was useless to insist, they told my husband the motive which brought them there. It was regarding that unhappy fellow Chapado, whom they were trying to save.

My husband moved to pity, came to me and without

any preamble said: "You know that a man is sentenced to death and must be shot in the morning?" "I know it," I replied. "Well, they tell me that his life lies in your hands, and that if you wish it, he will be pardoned!" . . . At these words, I turned pale and a cold sweat broke out all over me. "Know," he added, "that a deputation came a few moments ago to tell me so; they will soon be back for the answer. The poor soldier is a splendid young man, he has a fine record of eleven years of military life. He is the victim of an impulse of anger, as the sergeant hated him and struck him unjustly in the presence of his companions. Chapado did nothing more than to place his hand on the guard of his sword and that was enough to cause him to be condemned to death. The life of that man depends upon the Queen. They tell me that she loves you very much, and if you ask her for a pardon, she will not deny you." "But the Queen will think me foolish," I answered, frightened. "What am I, beside all those who have already uselessly asked her? My solicitation will be of no avail! I shall never dare! . . . " In the meanwhile the deputation came back, repeating to me what I already knew. I trembled! . . . I could not speak, so great was my trepidation. However, I promised to do my best. But immediately I stumbled against a great difficulty. General Narvaez, Duke of Valencia and President of the Ministry, was generally feared owing to his excessive severity; this explained the request that I should make a direct attempt, unknown to him, to the Queen. "I can never do that" I answered them. I was recommended to the General and found in him a frank, loyal, amiable and distinguished gentleman; so it was to him first that I should make my request. The right road was always my choice for my action.

"But you are going to lose that poor man," they said to me. "Is he not already lost?" I answered, "nothing worse can happen to him. Let me be." These people shrugged their shoulders and, shaking their heads, took leave of me, convinced in advance of my failure.

Most happily the President of the Ministry was at the theatre. I asked if he would kindly come to see me for a

Engraved by Implemercier & Co., Paris

MADAME DUPIN (GEORGES SAND)

One of the greatest French novelists of her sex of the XIX Century. She felt a great fascination toward Madame Ristori's art and in some of her writings called her "Femme Divine!"

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moment. The Duke of Valencia, courteous as ever, hastened to comply with my request. As soon as I found myself alone with him, I invited him to sit down. The Duke was struck by my looks and voice which betrayed the emotion that had taken possession of me.

"General, you have told me once, that you would not refuse any request of mine owing to the esteem with which you were pleased to honour me. Encouraged by that I ask for the pardon of the poor soldier! I am a stranger here, and have been only a short time in Madrid but owing to the interest of all the citizens and to my feeling for the young man, I am ready to argue that he deserves to live. It was suggested that I go direct to the Queen, without consulting you, but I am convinced that you, the first one whom I approach, will give me your merciful support, so that my words may the more easily reach the heart of her Majesty. I am aware of the great esteem which she has for you and of the faith she has placed in you, owing to your faithfulness to her person, and to the value of your counsel, which has saved the country from many dangers."

"My good lady," answered the Duke, "it is impossible. . . . I am sorry, but it is necessary to make an example. The revolutions begin almost always with the army; not long ago, we had some similar cases . . . we used clemency, you see the result. It is necessary to make an example! The whole Municipality just called on the Queen to ask for mercy, and I have advised her not to yield, not to allow herself to be moved. After this, how could I advise you differently?"

I did not lose courage, I persisted in my entreaties with all the enthusiasm which makes one eloquent. Finally I was able to move the Duke. "Ah, my lady!" he exclaimed, "I yield to your prayer! . . . Listen to me. I will have somebody ask her Majesty to grant you an audience, which she will do immediately. You will be received between the acts. Throw yourself at her knees . . . speak in the cause of the unfortunate young man with the same emphasis you just used with me. Supplicate the Queen. She loves you very much, but she will be perplexed and will answer that the Minister

of the Council would be opposed to it, send for me then, I shall come . . . and . . . hope. I can say nothing more!"

Emotion which was almost choking me, prevented my replying to these words. I grasped his hand with transport and followed his advice.

As soon as the General had left, they all crowded around me with pressing questions. What has he said? Does he consent? Has he refused? "Silence, for mercy's sake, leave me, I cannot say anything . . . wait . . . wait!"

After the first act the Queen granted me the audience that I had requested, and escorted by one of my managers, Signor Barbieri, a distinguished musician, I ascended the royal box. I was asked to wait a few minutes in the adjoining room. All of a sudden we heard confused voices, some one crying and people running. I learned later that an enemy of Narvaez, a member of the Court, had tried in order to antagonise the Duke, to brusquely introduce the sister of poor Chapado into the royal box, but owing to the arrival of Narvaez himself, the attempt had failed. Meanwhile, the Queen, agitated by the cries she had heard, began to feel faint, since she was about to become a mother. Alfonso XII. was born only a month later. As soon as she recovered, she asked to have me shown in. I was soon ushered into her presence, the good Queen asked to be excused for having kept me waiting, and for her emotion. All the ministers surrounded her. Without losing any time, I threw myself at her knees, I kissed the hand she had extended to me and exclaimed: "Your Majesty, I ask mercy for Chapado! Be moved by our prayers. He has erred, it is true, but in this one instance deign to judge kindly this unfortunate man. He acted after a bloody assault, unjustly made upon him in the presence of his companions. Grant life to a devout subject, who is brave and ready to shed his blood for his queen! If my humble merits have ever had the good fortune to win Your Majesty's sympathy, grant me the pardon which I beg with pleading hands!"

The Queen, much moved, replied: "Be calm, Madame,

I would like to, but the President of the Ministry assures me. . . . " I interrupted her, saying: "If Your Majesty will deign to express to him the impulses of your generous heart, he is human, and certainly will not have the courage to oppose your wish." At that moment, Narvaez stepped forward and bowed his head in assent. Then the Queen grasping my hands, lifted me up. "Well, my lady, yes. . . . We pardon him!"

Hearing the noise made by the audience, which was anxious to have the performance resumed, and with my heart full with joy, I took leave of her Majesty.

"What different kind of tragedies are played to-night! At last there is one with a happy ending," she said to me; then ordering a pen brought to her, she signed the pardon. One of the adjutants ran with it to the condemned man.

The crowd was waiting for me at the foot of the stairs, the news having been spread of my audience with the Queen. I did not walk down the stairs, I flew, crying: "The pardon is granted! . . . the pardon is granted! . . . "

Upon my reappearance, a storm of applause broke forth! in the enthusiasm of the audience, the name of the Queen was mingled with mine. By gestures I tried to indicate that to her Majesty the thanks were due; while she, always thoughtful of me, cried: "No, no, it is to her, it is to her! . . . "

I owe to the Queen one of the most memorable nights of my existence. The pen which signed the pardon for the brave and honest young man, and which was later given to me, will be to my children a holy remembrance of a great joy experienced by their mother!

But though the life of the soldier was spared, still, in order not to deviate from the military laws, he was sentenced to life imprisonment in one of the prisons of Alcala. The task though hard seemed nothing in the face of a life saved! I begged a commutation of the sentence, and it was reduced to six years.

In one of my trips to Madrid, I expressed my wish to know the unfortunate fellow. The letters that he had written me, without ever having seen me, showed him to be a good-hearted man, with a keen sense of honour, and

of the most sincere gratitude. I asked for permission to go and see him in his prison, which was not far from Madrid; and the Governor granted it to me.

On reaching the place with my husband, an old friend of ours and I, were shown into the receiving-room of the prison. Nicolas Chapado was soon brought to me. He was clad in a convict's suit, and came in with his head bowed and holding his cap convulsively in his hands. He threw himself at my feet, kissing my clothes in his joy, though his emotion prevented his saying a word.

Everyone was moved. I could not repeat what sentiments of gratitude he at last expressed to me, or how deeply I appreciated his thankfulness! . . . I learned, later on, that owing to his irreproachable conduct, he had secured the good-will both of his guardians and of his fellow-prisoners, and that he had been promoted to the grade of watchman in some workshop. They all loved him and obeyed him, and the sergeant who had been the cause of his misfortune, having fallen seriously ill, had when at the point of death, asked to see him and had besought his pardon for the harm he had unjustly done him. This Chapado did not hesitate for a moment to grant. Before I left I promised to use all my influence to obtain his complete pardon.

As soon as the news of my visit was known in the prison, everyone wished to see me, and as I came down the large stairway, with the warden at one side and Chapado at the other, all the convicts kneeled down respectfully, uncovering their heads. I cannot tell the extent of my emotion, or how, upon beholding that touching picture, my eyes filled with tears!

Later I obtained the release of Chapado, and every time I was in Madrid, he ran to see me, and whenever I furnished him with the means to come and hear me in some of my plays, he proved a most enthusiastic applauder. I was told, between the acts, and in consequence of some outbursts of applause in the audience, that when they implored him to be quiet, he insisted upon relating to his neighbours his lugubrious story. He told it also to those who did not care to hear it. "But do you not remember that I was in the 'ardent chapel' with the

spiritual confessor beside me, begging me to recommend my soul to God! . . . It was she who implored and obtained my pardon from the Queen Isabelle! . . . I love her as a mother. . . . I could die for her! . . . " And he would conclude these impetuous outbursts by crying as loud as he could: "Long live Ristori! . . . . Long live Ristori! . . . long live the Queen! . . . " at the risk of being taken for a lunatic! And what letters he would write, when I was away, all filled with kind, poetic and almost Oriental thoughts. He called me: " *Mi madre querida!*" My darling mother!

CHAPTER V

A MISTAKE OF THE POLICE CONCERNING A TELEGRAM—MY PROFESSIONAL TOUR THROUGH HOLLAND—THE WHISKERS OF THE STUDENTS OF COIMBRA—MY FIRST PERFORMANCE IN FRENCH—IN RUSSIA

AFTER having again visited Vienna, Buda-Pest and Italy during the month of April of the same year, I returned to Paris. Every time I had to make a new appearance before the Parisians—such a pleasant and congenial public—I endeavoured to prepare some new play which should interest the habitués of my dear theatre Ventadour.

The preceding year my friend Montanelli, a man of superior culture, who owing to the strenuous part he had taken in our political movements, was patiently dragging along his life in exile, conceived the idea of writing for me a drama in three acts. He took his inspiration from a very tragic argument from Plutarch, called "Camma." Camma was a priestess of Diana, renowned for her rare beauty. As the reader knows, her husband, Sinatus was treacherously murdered by Synorus, Prince of Galitia, in order that he might marry the widow, of whom he was madly enamoured.

Camma, discovering that Synorus is the murderer of her husband pretends to yield to his wishes and leads him to the temple for the celebration of their nuptials. The rite is to be solemnised by both drinking, one after the other, from the same cup.

Camma being a priestess, the high priest proposes that she prepare the nuptial cup. She, taking advantage of her privilege, puts poison in it. The first to bring the cup to his lips is the ill-fated Synorus, who is immediately taken with agonising pain, and dies soon after, but not until Camma has revealed to him her premeditated vengeance. Despising life, Camma also drinks the poisoned cup, and dies happy in the

certainty that she will be reunited in Elysium, to her beloved Sinatus.

Regarding this tragic end I must tell of a comic incident. In preparing the tragedy Signor Montanelli used to send to me, by instalments, the parts already written in order to have my judgment and approval, I found the death scene of Camma, my part—was too long as it caused me to talk too much. Filled with this idea, I wished to communicate it to my friend as quickly as possible and in great haste telegraphed him as follows:

> "You forgot that I am anxious to die, and in the presence of the corpse of the victim, with whom I have shared the poison, I can not speak eternally."

One can readily imagine how a telegram like this, addressed to a person well known to be prominently identified with the political events of the time, surprised and aroused the suspicion of the clerk of the telegraph-office. He hurried to transmit the telegram to the chief of police, and played a most ridiculous part afterwards when the matter was explained.

On the evening of April 23, 1857, the first performance of the tragedy took place, achieving a splendid success.

In the year 1858, I signed a contract with the principal theatres of Holland. My first performance was given in Amsterdam.

Remembering that the Dutch bore the reputation of being a phlegmatic people, not easy to enthuse, I anticipated merely a respectful reception, nothing more. What then was my amazement on seeing my audience light up and become as demonstrative as a Southern people! My astonishment had no bounds, when later, I learned that the citizens were organising for one of my free nights, a great public demonstration, which, the papers were already announcing, was to take the form of a festival tribute to dramatic art.

More than twenty thousand people, of all classes, besides a large number of working corporations, artistic societies, university clubs, all preceded by their respective flags and musical bands, took part in the demonstration. At nine o'clock on the appointed night, under my windows, the huge procession began to march cheering

enthusiastically. The scene was lighted by thousands of torches, and fire works, intermingling the Italian and Dutch colours, made a brilliant effect. It looked like a bit of fairyland!

Unfortunately the crowding of such immense numbers had its disagreeable consequences! Many were precipated into the canals, suffering nothing worse, however, than an enforced cold bath. Such a spectacle can more readily be imagined than described. To give you an idea of its imposing character, I was informed that the king had referred to it in the following terms: "It was not enough for a revolution, but too much for a demonstration!"

Leaving Amsterdam I completed the tour of this commercial country of Holland, visiting its principal towns and being everywhere honoured with the most cordial and flattering receptions.

When at The Hague, I was made the object of the most grateful attentions by Queen Sophia, a cultured worshipper of the fine arts. She gave repeated proofs of warm interest in me every time we met and her manifestations of kindness to me continued as long as she lived. His Majesty the King, also often honoured me with his presence at the theatre, and the last time I had the honour of meeting him at Wiesbaden, it was his pleasure to confer upon me the Order of Golden Medal, an Order instituted in Holland for the purpose of ennobling the disciples of the fine arts cults. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at if I accepted with the greatest joy, the invitation to visit that country again. I returned the following year my mind still filled with sweet remembrances of the events I have briefly narrated above.

I shall not repeat myself by describing this second visit, but I cannot refrain from mentioning another demonstration with which I was greeted, because of its unique and striking character. Let me call your attention to the fact that this period of my professional career, was coincident with the warlike feats with which Italy was then astonishing the world.

When I reached the city of Utrecht, the young students of the University, rejoicing in the marvellous prestige

gained by King Victor Emanuel II. and Garibaldi, wished to receive me, an Italian artist, with the same enthusiasm with which they were exulting in the triumphant development of our national struggle for independence. It was, therefore, the whole population—the intelligent learned youth of the renowned University of Utrecht—that I found at the station waiting to receive me. It was an impressive occasion, and I still recall the pleasure I experienced, as I realised that such a flattering reception was meant rather as homage to Italy than to my personality.

The procession started from the station. The carriage, drawn by four horses, in which I was seated with the rest of my family, was preceded by an advance-guard of men on horseback, composed of the most distinguished students of the University. Other members of my escort, rode alongside and behind my carriage. In this manner I drove through the principal streets of the city, which were crowded with spectators, on my way to the hotel.

I gave a performance that same night and it is superfluous to tell how warmly I was greeted. After the performance, I was honoured with a torch-light serenade, which is so picturesque in Northern countries. In commemoration of this event a beautiful engraving was made, of which I was presented with the first copy.

During the first part of October, 1859, I went to Portugal, where, between the cities of Lisbon and Oporto, I gave a series of twenty-four performances.

I cannot put into words the impression made upon me by the majestic and beautiful panorama of Lisbon and the imposing shores of the river Tagus, seen from the ocean, nor can I describe the scene. It would take a mightier pen than mine to do it justice. My professional success here was but a repetition of the honours I had received in other countries.

What a lover of art was King Ferdinand with all the actors! He showed his love of it by every possible manifestation of kindness to me. I still preserve a sketch that he drew for me in my album. On every succeeding visit to Lisbon, I received the high consideration of the

King and a greater measure of kindness from its people. Even in 1878, when I again visited the capital of Portugal I always found a most appreciative audience. From the royal family, of which the Queen Pia of Savoy, is such a great ornament, I received the highest expressions of esteem.

While speaking of Portugal, I cannot pass unnoticed a play I produced in the month of February of 1860, in the town of Coimbra, and of which I have the most amusing recollections.

As is well known, the principal university of Portugal is in Coimbra. In the Athenæum of the University, there is a very pretty theatre-hall suited to the requirements of the students. On some occasions when the artists of a dramatic company have met with the favour of the public at Lisbon, they have been asked to stop at Coimbra and perform in this theatre. The Board of the University, begged me to recite "Medea." I consented with pleasure. It was my desire to make an experiment on a public, with whose main characteristic I had been struck so forcibly the previous year, when going through Coimbra. The picturesqueness of the students' uniform made an impression upon me. They wore a garment somewhat like a priest's cassock buttoned up to the chin, short knee breeches, a wide collar, a cap à la Dante, and a large black cloak covered the entire body, making their dark complexions and strongly marked features more striking. Their long beards, almost always black, contributed to give a stronger effect to their big black eyes.*

As I mentioned above, I was to play "Medea," the production of which offered some scenic difficulties. One of the fundamental rules of the University forbade the employment of women as supernumeraries. How then

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*This costume, almost mediæval in its quaintness, awakened my curiosity as to its origin. I learned that King Don Diniz, in the year 1288, founded in Lisbon a school for the "General Study of Sciences." This school was composed of branches of fine arts, of canonic right, of civil right and also of medicine. In 1290 Pope Nicholas IV., consolidated the school. In 1306 the king transferred it to Coimbra and constituted it a university similar to those then existing all through the cultured parts of Europe.

were we to represent the scenes in which the "Canephores" women are to appear! Here the students proposed a plan worthy of their lively imagination. They volunteered to disguise themselves as girls. Though the proposition seemed somewhat strange, considering the whiskers of the students which they would not be allowed to shave off, still I had to accept it, recommending them, however to cover their faces in the best possible manner, with a thick veil.

On entering the theatre to get ready for the play, I was received by the professors of the university, who had kindly improvised for me a dressing-room, which was elegantly furnished and supplied with all that was necessary.

Now we come to the performance. The hall was crowded. The most fashionable ladies of the place filled the boxes. I must confess that I felt uneasy, fearing that at the most dramatic point, the tragedy might turn into a farce! Fortunately that did not happen, though at one moment I thought that my apprehensions would be justified. In order to accustom myself to the appearance of such original "Canephores," I had taken the precaution, before beginning the play, to look at them closely, but I could not foresee what happened afterwards. During the most important scene between Medea and Creusa in the first act, I chanced to turn my eyes to a box on the proscenium. . . . What did I see? . . . the Canephore girls, who a short time before had appeared on the stage wearing white veils and wreaths of roses, and whom Creusa had sent to pray in the temple of Diana: smoking with the greatest nonchalance long Havana cigars! Though accustomed to comic scenes on the stage, yet at the sight of that ridiculous group of masquerading students, I had a very hard struggle to keep myself from exploding with laughter. However, I mastered myself, and as soon as I left the stage I sent a hurried message to those new-style Canephores requesting them to keep to the rear of the box.

From Portugal, by way of the sea and through Belgium, I returned to France, stopping however, a few days in Hanover, where I gave two performances.

The whole royal family lavished upon me protestations of the most devoted friendship. King George was an interesting person not only because of the cruel infirmity which he had so heroically borne since the age of sixteen, but also because he was still a brilliant talker, and not at all blind concerning dramatic art. The cheerful affability with which I was received by the royal family, over whom a loving mother presided, is among my dearest recollections.

From Hanover I went to Paris. This was in the month of April, 1860. On the first night of the 21st, the annual performance at the Comédie Française was about to be given as a special benefit for the grand-niece of Racine, Mademoiselle Trochu. For the occasion, the members desired to get up a programme composed of different features.

For this reason my good friend Monsieur Legouvé asked my coöperation. He suggested that I not only give the fourth act of "Phædra," but that I also recite in French a poem of his own composition. The reader will easily understand, that I was most willing to give my support to the benefit by playing in Italian. I was rather reluctant to consent to recite a French poem, in consideration of the great difficulty to me of the pronunciation of French, and the diffidence I should feel in reciting it before a critical and cultured audience like that of the Comédie Française. Besides, I knew that during the recitation I would be surrounded by the greater number of actors belonging to the Comédie. The thought frightened me. However, Legouvé insisted and ended by persuading me to consent to recite his verses, which he promised he would teach me to give with a perfect pronunciation before the evening of the performance.

I still hear the exultant cry of Legouvé when I yielded to his entreaties "*La patrie est sauvée! La patrie est sauvée!*" (The country is saved!) a cry which brought out from the adjoining room my friends who were awaiting the result of our conversation. Won to his wishes by the encouragements of the poet, I began seriously to study his poem. "*Audaces fortuua juvat.*"

My bold attempt met with a happy result. The audience received me as a favourite daughter of the house of Molière. But what went to my heart and touched me even deeper than the acclamations of the audience, were the warm approbations of my fellow artists of the evening!

Here is the programme:

"'Atalia'
Fourth act of 'Phædra,' played by Mme Ristori.
A homage to Racine. Lines of Monsieur Legouvé, recited by Mme. Ristori.
'Les Plaideurs'."

It was owing to that happy result, that another far more important request was submitted to me. It was not now a matter of my temporary assistance. Legouvé had not yet relinquished his fixed idea to have me play in French. A man of great resources, he put to task all his powers of persuasion to win me to his purpose. He made capital particularly of my professed gratitude to the French nation, to the Emperor Napoleon III. and to the heroic army, which returning victorious from the battle-fields of Magenta and Solferino, had made its triumphal entry into Paris. Many times, indeed, I had expressed the desire to be able to satisfy my debt of gratitude to the French people, whose approval and applause, had opened to me the doors of all the European theatres—"Here is the opportunity"—Legouvé would say to me, "the effort that I ask you to make will be the true evidence of your sentiments." The pleader won his cause; but while yielding to his eloquence, I was not unmindful that, in doing so I should also gratify the Parisians who were eager to see me undertake the difficult task of playing in their own language.

Having thus conquered all my hesitations, I agreed to undertake the learning of a drama in four acts which Legouvé was writing for me, and in which a happy inspiration decided him to have me take the part of an Italian woman, whose foreign pronunciation should in no way mar the character.

The heroine of the drama is a young actress of high reputation. Having been invited to go from one Court to another she finally meets a young prince who falls

madly in love with her, and in spite of the barriers opposed by his high position and rank in life, wishes to marry her. The young actress understands his difficulties and loves him in secret. However, her gratitude to the mother of the young prince, whose kindness she has often experienced, will not permit her to be the cause of trouble in the family all of whom she regards as her benefactors. She cannot lie by denying her love for the prince, and not having the strength to resist his wooing, she secretly quits the Court.

It was an actress who was to interpret the part of an actress, the enthusiasms, the abandons, the disillusions of which made it a complication of difficulties and contrasts.

I was ready to begin my study, and for the sake of facilitating the carrying out of our plan, Legouvé suggested joining me later, on the trip I was about to undertake on the Rhine. It was a continual rehearsing from morning to night. He took advantage of every available moment to impress my part on me and help me to conquer the difficulties of the French pronunciation. He tried most arduously to minimise for me the peculiar difficulty of enunciating the "rs," which we pronounce closed in Italian, and which are to our language an element of expression and energy.

By the end of our trip, my study of my part was completed and we settled on the following month of March for the production of "Beatrix," which was to be given at the Odéon.

Leaving Paris, I betook myself to Holland. I ran up the Rhine through Livonia and Courland.

I went to St. Petersburg in the month of December of the same year, and returned there in November, 1861. I was in Moscow in the February of 1862.

My heart is filled with affectionate recollections of my professional tour in Russia. The remembrance of the warm reception of the people of that country, is still vivid in my mind. Though the members of the Court could not attend the theatre owing to a period of Court mourning, the Emperor Alexander II. and the Empress wished to hear me. They invited me to attend a soirée at the Winter Palace. I recited before them the third

act of "Mary Stuart." I shall never forget the kind reception they gave me. But I formed my criterion of the enthusiasm of which the Northern peoples are capable, by my reception at Moscow.

It is true that in the old Muscovite capital the young element prevails, attracted there by the magnitude of its University. Here also, as in Holland, the students distinguished themselves, but by a different form of enthusiasm. I appreciate highly and still keep as an object of most precious ethical value, the gift they gave me in the shape of a golden bracelet, in which is set an amethyst symbolising the globe, upon which hangs a glittering star . . . the planet of art! The greater number of the students at the University not being rich, this evidence of their appreciation was doubly cherished by me.

On the morning of my departure from Moscow the students, *en masse*, were waiting for me at the station. On my arrival, they crowded around me, and as if by enchantment, I was carried to the private car set apart for me. The members of my family joined me as best they could. Up to the moment of our departure, our car was transformed into an autograph delivery-wagon. Many hundred times I signed my name on flying pieces of paper, in note-books, on newspaper clippings, and other scraps! The whistle of the locomotive at last blew the starting signal, and among the most exuberant acclamations, the train moved out.

Dear remembrances! I wish as many manifestations of devotion and affection and equally sweet remembrances to all the actresses who will come after me!

From Moscow I travelled directly to Paris, there to begin my rehearsals of "Beatrix." While these were progressing, a liking for my part grew on me. I felt so profoundly the reality of the character which had been created and developed under my eyes, that when the day of the first performance came, the 25th of March 1861, it seemed to me as if I had only to play one of my usual parts, and I was not troubled as to what the public would think. An instinctive feeling assured me that it would appreciate my daring effort and accept it as a

tribute of gratitude from an Italian woman. This very thought was my salvation; in fact, I felt so certain of myself, so tranquil, that I answered with a laugh the exhortations of my fellow actors to take courage. . . . But once on the stage, the old Italian adage—"*Altro é parlar di morte, altro é morire!*" (How different it is to speak of death than it is to die,) came to my mind again.

Though I was generally familiar with the audiences of the principal cities of Europe, at the sight of such a throng of people, as that evening crowded the Odéon, I felt frightened. The applause with which I was greeted on my entrance, far from encouraging me, produced the contrary effect, making me comprehend the exacting expectations of the audience.

All the power of a strong will was none too much to help me to overcome a moment of hesitancy. I began to act, and succeeded first in conquering myself and later the public. . . . I repeated the performance for forty nights.

As a last word concerning the drama "Beatrix," I shall add that it took amazingly well in all the provincial towns in France, in Holland, and in other countries.

Some later years, in 1865, I undertook to play it in Paris again for twenty consecutive nights, at the Théâtre du Vaudeville.

CHAPTER VI

IN GERMANY—AMONG THE RUINS OF THE ACROPOLIS—A PERFORMANCE WITH BOTH ERNESTO ROSSI AND TOMMASO SALVINI—DETERMINATION TO KEEP THE ENGAGEMENTS I HAD MADE—CROSSING A BRIDGE—MY FIRST PROFESSIONAL TOUR IN AMERICA—A NIGHT IN HAVANA

I MADE a second trip to Berlin during the month of March 1862, playing there for seven nights at the Royal Theatre. The royal family honoured me with kind attentions, while the good Emperor William I., who was then King of Prussia, conferred upon me the cross of the Order of Civil Merit.

Afterward I was asked to give two performances at the Ducal Theatre of Weimar. On that occasion I was the object of a great many courtesies through the kindness of the duke and duchess of that small state.

Attending a reception at Court, I had an opportunity to appreciate the culture of the prince. He knew by heart many passages of Dante's poem, which he had partially translated, and every time I met him, I could not help noticing that he knew our language very well and could use it admirably.

Among my remembrances of the numerous distinctions and favours conferred on me by the Court of Berlin, I cannot forget that I owe to the Emperor William, the honour of having met the great composer Meyerbeer, and this is how it happened. During the few days that I remained at Weimar, the celebration of the birthday of King William took place. The Duke, as the reader knows, is the brother of the Queen of Prussia, wife of the present Emperor of Germany, and he begged of me, in the name of the Queen, to go unknown to the King in Berlin and play there "I Gelosi Fortunati." A pretty and artistic little theatre was secretly fitted up for the occasion, in one of the halls of the royal palace. The King was very

much pleased and satisfied by the unexpected surprise prepared for him by his wife, the Queen, and the little play was received in a very flattering manner.

After the performance a supper was given. Several tables were served in the hall. It was at this supper that the King presented me to Meyerbeer, whom he asked to be my cavalier for the remainder of the night. It did not take the celebrated maestro long to interest me greatly with his witty conversation. The following day he came with his two daughters to visit me, and we spent a most agreeable hour speaking of art and of Italy.

During the balance of 1862 and up to September 1864 I visited the cities and the countries where I had previously been. I made long stays at home, in Italy, and particularly in Sicily, which I left in September 1864, to go to Alexandria in Egypt.

In the land of the Pharaohs I realised how great is the power exercised by dramatic art upon different natures.

The cosmopolitan society of Alexandria lavished upon me, especially on the night of my benefit, the most flattering tributes of esteem and kindness. Being urged by repeated and pressing invitations, I went to Cairo to give a performance, at a theatre, which had been improvised and put up in a few days, the old theatre of the town having recently been destroyed by fire.

On the 2d of December I left for Smyrna. The voyage to that place was a very unfortunate one! We had taken passage upon a steamer of the Austrian Lloyd Line, called *The Empress*. Leaving Alexandria we encountered a very stormy sea and when passing the Colossus of Rhodes, the boiler exploded! For forty-eight long hours our vessel was at the mercy of the waves! The captain and the officers, did their best under the circumstances. Signals for help were vainly repeated every moment. Our sufferings were frightful. It seemed inevitable that we should all be submerged by the heavily rolling sea; while the lamentations of the women and children, combined with their fervent prayers, tore our hearts! But at length owing to the strenuous efforts of the captain and the crew, the damage to the machinery was repaired, after a fashion, and we were able to go back

to Alexandria. I felt terribly prostrated for several days afterwards. Nevertheless, I soon took passage again, on another steamer of the same line, the *Archduchess Charlotte*, bound for Constantinople. I do not exaggerate when I say that I had a moral struggle with myself at this time, in order to make the sentiment of duty prevail over that of discouragement, induced by the very sad and depressing physical conditions of which I was a victim. However, I am only glad to be able to say that all through my professional career, I never failed to meet the obligations I had contracted.

On the way to Constantinople, I gave a performance at Smyrna. When in Constantinople, owing to previously made engagements and also because I was ardently desirous of making a stay at Athens, I gave only thirty performances. But although my season in the old city of the Byzantium was of short duration, still it was filled for me with most pleasant memories and associations.

I arrived at Athens on the 19th of February, 1865. I had time to give but five performances there. When once I set foot on the Piræus, I could hardly wait until I visited the Acropolis. I did satisfy that ardent desire of mine, the day after my first performance, having for my guide the renowned archæologist Rangabey, now Minister to Berlin. This learned guide of mine, gradually reconstructed before my mental vision the world of ancient Greece with its classic treasures. What luck was it for me to find again among those sublime marbles all the noble poses that I had endeavoured to reproduce before my audiences! I stood ecstatic before so many marvels, contemplating the temple of the Caryatides, studying the Greek reliefs in order to reproduce, at the first opportunity in my costumes, those stupendous folds. Mr. Rangabey had almost to have recourse to force, in order to tear me away from admiring that wonderful relief of the Victory Actere, the most minute details of which, I wanted to impress on my memory.

I also obtained a wonderful impression from a visit I paid to the Temple of Theseus and the Theatre of Bacchus.

What enchantment it was for me to gaze on that shining summit, gilded by the rays of the sun, upon the tops of the imposing mountains of Hymettus, Pantelicus, and Parnassus, which gird the Acropolis! What a panorama! What marvellous effects! What emotions! How many sensations I experienced on finding myself in the midst of those ruins that speak to one of the history of so many centuries, eloquent witness of the really beautiful, of which Greece was the teacher of Rome, aye I will say, even of the whole world! How I would have liked to prolong my soul's enjoyment of that sublime scene! But how often must the contemplation of art be sacrificed to the urgency of the moment! At that time precisely, I was forced to experience the reality of this truth!

A former engagement which I had not been able to revoke, prevented me from responding to the courteous advances of King George, and accepting one of his most alluring invitations. His Majesty having noticed the enthusiastic manifestations of his people for the love of my art, conceived the idea of reviving in the XIX century, the Greek tragedy, with all its practices, with its chorus, in a word, in its entirety, all its parts, which no longer harmonise with the corrupted forms of the modern drama. It was his desire that we should perform a tragedy, having for its *motif* a Grecian subject, in full daylight, inside of the Theatre of Bacchus, where all Greece would come. That classic inclosure, had to be put in better condition for the performance, in the least possible time, by Grecian architects. My heart was jubilant at the thought that I should be able, in the very land of Greece, to walk upon the stage of its ancient theatre, and go back for a moment, to the classicism of art, of Sophocles, of Euripides, of Æschylus, and to rest the mind within the majesty of Olympus! It would have been a memorable event! Let the reader fancy the regret I experienced in having to renounce this great temptation offered to me by his Majesty. But that poetic enchantment had to vanish away before the prosaic lines of an ill-fated contract!

Farewell to poetry! Farewell to my dear public of Athens! Farewell to my amiable guide!

Photograph by Sarony, New York

ADELAIDE RISTORI IN 1866

Photograph by Ch. Reutlinger

ADELAIDE RISTORI IN 1862

I was bound to go to Paris and play in French at the Théâtre Lyrique a drama of Legouvé's called: "Les Deux Reines." But on my way, getting off at Messina, a telegram from Legouvé reached me, saying that owing to some political complications with the Holy See, Napoleon III., had forbidden the production of the play!

Fortunately we were able to go and play in some of the theatres of Italy, and that, with great satisfaction to me, as the longer my sojourn in foreign countries was prolonged, the greater was my desire to behold again my native land. It was with much pleasure that I accepted the proposition of filling a professional tour through Italy. I went through Naples, Leghorn, Florence, Milan and Turin, during the time I was to have spent in Paris.

I returned to the great metropolis of the French at the expiration of the month of April 1865, to fill an engagement I had made to play "Beatrix" again at the Théâtre du Vaudeville.

It was at that time that Florence was celebrating the 6th centenary of Dante. All the world of culture had been invited to honour the "Divine Poet."

The Mayor of Florence offered me great inducements to go there and coöperate with Tommaso Salvini and Ernesto Rossi, in giving greater impulse to the national celebration.

I accepted with joy the flattering invitation.

To be able to associate myself with those two giants of the dramatic art, was for me a most fortunate and cherished opportunity. It was owing to this, for me happy association, that someone originated the idea that we three artists should play together at the theatre of "Cocomero," in aid of some charity, in a drama suited to our individual temperaments and so aptly commemorating Dante's conception of "Francesca da Rimini," dramatised by Silvio Pellico.

The rôle of Paolo was interpreted by Ernesto Rossi! Salvini took the one of Lanciotto, which he rendered an unexpected creation; I played Francesca.

Each one of us acted our best, displaying passion and ardour. New effects were produced as by enchantment! Ernesto Rossi proved himself a member of that school

which has no masters, so to speak, but which finds its inspiration in the impulse of a superior genius. He never could have been a celebrity, had he not displayed a distinctive temperament and a most powerful talent.

The performance was solemn in its character, and in order to commemorate the event, a memorial tablet was placed in the foyer of the theatre.

This was a memorial to which I am pleased to have contributed and I have wished to mention it in these pages as a tribute of homage and affection to my illustrious companions, Salvini and Rossi.

Having paid my debt of devotion and gratitude to the great poet Dante, as well as to Italy, I hastened to return to Paris to resume the rehearsals of "Beatrix."

It was on the 22d of May that I appeared again before the Parisians and was again received with the same expression of appreciation as in my previous years. This second effort to play in French, suffered nothing from comparison with the first one.

From that time up to July of 1866 I travelled all through Italy, Austria, Holland, and Belgium.

My exceptionally good health never abandoned me through my long and tiresome journeys, though unfortunately I never was able to accustom myself to voyaging by sea. All through those rapid changes I acquired a marvellous store of endurance. That sort of life infused in me sufficient energy to lead me through every kind of hardship with the resolution and authority of a commanding general. All obeyed me. None questioned my authority owing to my absolute impartiality, being always ready as I was, either to blame or correct him who did not fulfil his obligations, also to praise without any distinction of class, those who deserved it. I almost always met with courtesy among the actors under my direction, and if any one of them dared to trouble our harmony, he was instantly put to his proper place by the firmness of my discipline.

The artistic management of the plays was left to me all in its details. Every order and every disposition came from me directly. I looked after all matters large and

Photograph by H. Rocher & Co., Chicago

TOMMASO SALVINI

One of the greatest tragedians Italy has produced. Born in Leghorn in 1829

Photograph by Warren, Boston

ERNESTO ROSSI

A celebrated Italian tragedian, a contemporary of Salvini. (1829–1896)

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small, the things that every actor understands, contribute to making the success of a play.

Concerning my own personal interests, they were in charge of a private manager.

I am proud to say that my husband was the soul of all my undertakings. As I speak of him, my heart impels me to say that he ever exercised upon me and my professional career the kindest and most benevolent influence. It was he who upheld my courage, whenever I hesitated before some difficulty, it was he who foretold the glory I should acquire, he who pointed out to me the goal, and anticipated everything in order that I should secure it. Without his assistance I never should have been able to put into effect the daring attempt of carrying the flag of Italian dramatic art all over the globe.

My reluctance to leave my home and country was, at that time, very excusable. I was feeling anxious over the health of my dear old mother, and was haunted by the thought of losing her, while far away from her. So it really happened, for she died while I was on my way to Rio Janeiro. Ten years before I had experienced the sorrow of losing my dear father, in Florence, without having the supreme comfort of closing his eyes, I being at that time, at Wiesbaden, Germany.

Resuming the trend of my narrative, I took a great deal of pride in being mentioned as an example of punctuality. Some of my long travels were fraught with discomforts and perils. But if anyone among the members of my company was either afraid or for some other reason reluctant to follow me, I was the first one to set him a good example.

Leaving Moscow, in February, 1862, to go over to Dunaberg and give a performance, it happened that we had to cross a bridge near Kowno, on foot, in the middle of the night. Owing to the inclemency of the weather, it being very stormy, and the bridge being under repair and pronounced unsafe, it was rather a risky crossing. When we reached the spot some workmen were still intently at work, by torchlight. The torrent running beneath, swollen by the rain and the abundant melting of the snows, struck fear only to look at it, especially when one

knew that on the very same morning, a working-man had fallen down into the river and been drowned.

Hearing about this accident and seeing the not very reassuring bridge, all covered with boards and beams, my fellow-actors refused absolutely to cross it. Time was pressing, as the train to take us to our destination, was waiting on the other shore, while the hour for our departure had already passed. There was not a place in which we could find any accommodation for the night. Having been assured by the foreman superintending the work of repair on the bridge, that we could cross in safety, I felt persuaded that there wasn't really any danger, if we went over the bridge cautiously. Together with the members of my family, from whom I was never separated, joking and scoffing at the most stubborn ones, we crossed that long bridge. Seeing us, the members of the company, slowly, like sheep, followed us, stumbling here and there. Having thus conquered this difficulty, I was able to arrive at Dunaberg, the day set for my performance.

During the month of September, 1866, for the first time in my life, I crossed the ocean on my way to the United States, where I remained until May 17th of the following year. It was in the elegant Lyceum Theatre of New York, that I made my début, on the 20th of September, with "Medea." I could not anticipate a more enthusiastic reception than the one I was honoured with. I felt anxious to make myself known in that new part of the world, and let the Americans hear me recite for the first time, in the soft and melodic Italian language. I knew that in spite of the prevailing characteristics of the inhabitants of the free country of George Washington, always busy as they are in their feverish pursuit of wealth, that the love for the beautiful and admiration for dramatic art, were not neglected. During my first season in New York, I met with an increasing success, and formed such friendly relations with many distinguished and cultured people that time and distance, have never caused me to forget them. While writing these lines, I send an affectionate salutation to all those who in America, still honour me with their remembrance.

Leaving New York, I was asked to play in almost all the towns, both large and small, of the United States.

I will pass over the details of the most appreciative manifestations of enthusiasm of which I was made the subject everywhere that I performed in that country, but will add: "Many warm thanks to the generously enthusiastic American audiences!"

There is one thing to which I wish to call attention. The Americans have set in the theatrical field an example which old Europe has finally followed. They have introduced the custom of giving afternoon performances, matinees as they call them, thus giving to ladies without escort, the opportunity to attend a play, without interfering with their home duties, or going out at night.

Through the North American states, they usually have two performances in all the theatres, on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The applause at the matinee performances is less noisy and more reserved than that at the evening performances, but it is also more intelligently distributed. The young ladies would rush to my performances in such numbers that often it happened, when all seats were taken, that I was obliged to allow some of them to stand on the stage between the wings, and watch the play, It was a pleasure for me to see, between the acts, the pretty, fresh faces of those young girls, smiling gratefully at me, for the privilege they had been granted.

A large number of those enthusiastic young ladies, were permitted to attend the rehearsals of "Elizabeth, Queen of England," by Giacometti. The rôle of Elizabeth was one of the most difficult ones for me, because in portraying that character I had to bring all my art into play. Reading over the analysis I made further on of this part, one will easily see how much work it entailed on me. That production, owing to its magnificent scenic and dramatic effects, met in America with the greatest success of all.

Numerous were the places I visited in the United States. It would take too long to mention them all and to tell of the repeated success I met wherever I went. But suffice to say I thoroughly covered this delightful country and everywhere was better received than I

had anticipated. I left that country, as I have said, in May, 1867, to return there in the month of September of the same year.

During the first days on board the steamer *Europa*, crossing the Atlantic, on my second trip to America, we met with such stormy weather, that one of the deck-stewards lost his life, having been swept overboard by a huge wave. We were later informed that the poor fellow had a wife and children at Marseilles, who were depending on him for their support. It was a pitiful story and spread a gloom over all the passengers on board. We resolved to organise a soirée during the voyage, for the purpose of raising a fund for the unhappy family of the poor steward. The captain most kindly coöperated with us for the success of the occasion. The dining-room of the steamer was transformed into an elegant theatre, with a stage at one end.

As luck would have it, we had on board the celebrated soprano, Madame De La Grange, and with the balance of the actors of my company and myself, we were able to arrange an attractive programme for the soirèe.

Mme. De La Grange was to sing three of her favourite pieces, I was to recite the scene of the meeting of Mary Stuart with Elizabeth from Schiller's tragedy. A French gentleman had volunteered to sing a romance. The weather was then comparatively good, consequently we were inclined to hope that the following evening—that set for the soirée—would prove auspicious. But it is not safe to reckon with the sea. Just about noon, the waves began to swell and the wind to rise impetuously; while the boat rolled in every possible way. We are already beginning to feel the effect of it. Toward evening it calmed a little. We were able to commence the programme at the appointed hour.

I ascend the stage, feeling almost certain that I will triumph over the elements, and, filled with enthusiasm, I begin that beautiful invocation of Mary Stuart to the clouds, but the true clouds gather fatally above us, and the sea begins to rise again! At the time when Elizabeth comes in, my head commences to turn, I stagger . . . my throat chokes me . . .

drops of cold perspiration rise to my brow . . . . symptoms of *mal de mer* . . . I can hardly connect a word! My brother who is supporting me, playing the part of Talbot, fearing that the matter is becoming serious, runs out for a bottle of salts, which he gives to me to smell at every pause I make! Owing to this expedient I manage to reach the end, being held by Hannah, every time I am about to fall.

As soon as I was through with the struggle, I ran on deck, threw myself on a steamer-chair beside Mme. De La Grange, my fellow-sufferer and inquired of her how she had been able to get to the end of her part. From where I sat I could hear the song of that amateur who had offered his support. The poor fellow could not have chosen a more lugubrious subject. Singing in a funereal voice: "*Richard est mort! . . . Richard est mort!* . . . . " he largely contributed to increase the pains I was suffering. But notwithstanding all these mishaps, we were able to collect a rather large sum of money.

That concert for charity's sake was also the cause of an amusing episode, the details of which we heard the following day. One of the passengers who had complained to the captain of the neglect which he claimed the ship had suffered—while the officers were enjoying themselves in the salon—frightened by the rising sea, had donned a life-preserver and passed all the night on deck. The ridiculous man, would constantly cast furious glances upon us, who were perfectly innocent of causing the danger he fancied he had run of being swept away by the sea.

By the end of January of 1868 I left for the island of Cuba. What a passionate public I met at Havana! At every performance they showed to me some new form of enthusiasm.

One the evening of March 16th, I played for my special benefit performance, "Camma" and a small one-act play called: "What the Star Likes," a farce written for myself expressly, by the popular playwright, Gherardi del Testa. In the play, at a given point, being disguised in the costume of Jeanne d'Arc, I would recite those famous farewell lines of Schiller, so beautifully translated into Italian by the poet Maffei.

After two o'clock in the afternoon it was no longer possible to find a seat, and all the boxes had been sold the day before. As is customary in that country, many of the ladies take seats, either in the pit or in the gallery called "cazuela," so a great number of them, fearing that owing to the rush, they would not be able to obtain good seats later in the evening, took possession of their places at 2 P. M. and had their luncheon served there.

I mention these details not with the intention of boasting of my success, but only to show to what height the enthusiasm of certain people can reach.

Returning to the hotel after the performance, the people tried to unhitch the horses from my carriage, but I opposed myself energetically to such demonstration. I could not however prevent some young fellows from climbing upon the top of the carriage, while others seated themselves next to the driver, so that they could be near me. I was, besides, buried under an avalanche of flowers thrown at me.

Often I am carried back in thought to that magic spectacle of those tropical skies, where under a galaxy of scintillating stars, I was passing in review, between the lines of "volantas," filled with elegant Cuban women, in evening toilettes, who were throwing kisses to me, while their coachmen had much difficulty in holding in their horses, who were frightened by the light of the torches. Out of the thousand-and-one nights I have passed under a clear sky, that one was certainly the most beautiful!

The scene of that paradise has remained in my memory as an enchanting tableau. But so many pictures of that tropical nature, that seductive life with all its Oriental softness, have been painted, that I do not dare to attempt to give you a description of them. My best wishes from the depth of my heart, to the inhabitants of Havana, who, crowding our theatre, greeted me with so much appreciation!

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ADELAIDE RISTORI AS MARIE ANTOINETTE

CHAPTER VII

MY FIRST AND STORMY PERFORMANCE OF "MARIE ANTOINETTE AT BOLOGNA—BRAZIL AND ITS EMPEROR—THROUGH THE STEPPES OF RUSSIA—A WIFE WHO IS HAPPY IN BEING BEATEN BY HER HUSBAND—I RECITE A SCENE FROM "LADY MACBETH" IN ENGLISH

RETURNING from the United States, in the month of September, 1868, I made another professional tour of nine months' duration through Italy. I produced there for the first time the most popular drama of Paolo Giacometti, called "Marie Antoinette," which had aroused so much enthusiasm in the United States. Owing to my predilection for this drama and also to my old friendship for its author, I took particular pains in order to produce it with a splendid effect. I was especially careful that the execution of the play should be historically correct, and the costumes and scenery should portray exactly the time it represented. The love I had for historical truth, induced me to visit the "Conciergerie" in Paris, which had been the last dwelling-place of the unhappy Queen of France. I still recall the painful impression made upon me by the sight of this cell. Filled with the subject, I was studying in the environment of the great tragic human drama. I seemed to see that resigned martyr of the French Revolution, and to hear around me her heart-rending sighs!

It had been decided that the first night of "Marie Antoinette," should be witnessed by one of the most intelligent audiences of Italy and one most capable of appreciating the greatness of the production. My good star having brought me to Bologna to perform ten plays at the Theatre Brunetti, I decided to play "Marie Antoinette," on the evening of November 9th.

We had to overcome a great many difficulties in order to obtain, from the authorities of the place, the necessary

permission to produce the play. It was supposed by the censor, even before he had read it, that Marie Antoinette was a reproduction of some anarchistic subject. Even the republican party was persuaded that the drama, was a glorification of the French Revolution, and, excited by the attitude taken by authorities, was anticipating some kind of a public demonstration. Finally, owing to the intervention of some high official, who was fully convinced that we wouldn't do anything to trouble the public peace, we were allowed to announce the play.

At last the impatiently expected evening came. Owing to an exaggerated precaution, the usual number of police was reinforced by a squad of soldiers. The audience was immense, crowding the theatre in such a way, that a pin could not have dropped to the floor. The excitement in the beginning was intense, but as the play progressed the most revolutionary characters in the audience, saw that it was not meant either as an apology for the spirit of the French Revolution, or for any of their rebellious aspirations, but only as condemnation of an atrocious crime—the drama was nothing but an exposition of the awful trials of the unfortunate royal family of France. It was only meant to awaken sentiments of pity for the victims of that most tragic period. That did not suit the turbulent minds in the audience. At the conclusion of the second act, some signs of disapproval were manifest among those disaffected ones and they grew so noisy in their expressions during the third act, as to prevent the more reasonable part of the audience, from enjoying the remainder of the play.

The chief of police, who was seated in a proscenium box, felt very uneasy lest some serious trouble might arise. The author of the play, Signor Giacometti, doing his best to maintain his composure, was standing behind the wings, making encouraging gestures to the actors. I felt quite nervous myself, noticing that a minority, but the noisiest part of the spectators, had made up their minds to drown with their loud exclamations of disapproval the pathetic portions of the play which held the greater part of the audience spellbound. During one of the turbulent crises, I moved toward the wing where stood

Signor Giacometti, looking painfully excited, and said to him: "Come over to the footlights, you are an old acknowledged liberal character and they will listen to you." He was too much disturbed to understand the object of my request, while the audience was becoming more and more uncontrollable. It was necessary to take a bold stand. Seized by an irrepressible impulse, I rose resolutely from my chair, I moved toward the footlights and made a motion that I wished to speak. The audience quieted down as by enchantment, and I began my harangue with these words: "Ladies and gentlemen, in producing in Italy this drama of our illustrious compatriot, I thought I acted wisely in selecting as its first judge a Bolognese audience, so renowned for its keen intelligence and acquired appreciation of the beautiful. I do not ask anybody to applaud what he does not like, but in order to be able to pass a true judgment upon a work of this kind it is necessary to see and listen unbiased by party prejudice. Let all party feeling be forgotten then, and let the majority of this honourable audience who came here to-night unprejudiced by any political bias or aspiration, enjoy this historical and classic production according to its dramatic merits."

This little speech was received with an outburst of applause and succeeded in quieting even the most turbulent of the spectators. At the end of the play, at the falling of the curtain, I was called out several times, and came forward to the footlights hand in hand with the timid Signor Giacometti, who was now weeping with emotion.

Later, the chief of police and some other authorities came on the stage to thank me and to congratulate me on the courage I had shown, as if it had saved the country from some impending calamity!

After this experience the success of the play was fully assured, and it became very popular wherever I played it, so popular indeed, that in some small towns of Italy, women meeting me in the streets would point their fingers at me and exclaim: "Look, there goes Marie Antoinette!"

The papers, however, did not spare it in their criticism. The radicals found that the tortures practised by the cobbler Simon upon the unhappy Dauphin (Louis XVII.),

were exaggerated, while the sufferings and martyrdom of the other members of the royal family, were nothing but a poetical invention. Nevertheless, historical truth triumphed over fanaticism and from that time forward, "Marie Antoinette" was well received and most successfully produced everywhere.

In the first part of June, I sailed with my company from Italy to Rio de Janeiro. On the 20th of the same month I made my début with the drama "Medea" at the Theatre Fluminense, in the largest town of Brazil. Though the Brazilians were anxious to see me, and the theatre was well filled, even the members of the Imperial family being present at the performance, still to my great surprise, on my appearance on the stage in the scene where I come down from the mountain holding my two children by their hands, I was most coldly received! Not a sound of applause, not a murmur of greeting! The unexpected coldness astonished me, as I was aware of the reputation the Brazilians have of being very enthusiastic in their reception of dramatic artists.

However, soon after the disappointing effects of that opening scene, the enthusiasm of the audience rose and dissipated the first coldness, and when Medea, with words of desolation, maddened by the lamentations of her children asking for bread, exclaims:

> "Why can I not draw from my own veins
> The last drop of blood, and say:
> 'Take, drink my own blood! . . . .'"

the despairing invocation coming impetuously from my lips and out of the fulness of my heart, produced something like a shivering sensation in the audience, and resulted in bringing forth one of those spontaneous outbursts of applause which is called the baptism of a great success. When, later in the play Medea, turning to Creusa, declares to her that if she discovers her rival she will jump in a bound upon her like a leopard and tear her to pieces, the house broke into frantic applause.

How many honours and distinctions I was, later, made the recipient of by the people and the Sovereigns of Brazil! What a gentle mind and what an exceptionally cultured

personality I found in the Emperor Dom Pedro! He honoured me with his friendship, of which I am very proud, and neither time nor distance has ever lessened the warmth of my feeling for him. I was received at court together with my husband and children, and I will not attempt to describe or tell how much kindness and courtesy were bestowed upon me by that noble family. I had many opportunities to admire the culture and brilliant intellect of His Majesty the Emperor. He was familiar with all kinds of literature. Owing to his uprightness and his sound judgment in governing, he was loved by all his subjects. He had but one aim, and that was the progress and prosperity of his people. He often expressed the desire to undertake a trip to Europe, so that his country might benefit by the results of his observations of modern progress. But it is superfluous to mention the numerous noble qualities he possessed. His history has been made known to all the world.

I was wandering from one surprise to another and through repeated emotions while in that wonderful country.

It would not be for me to tell all that they devised in order to show their admiration for me. I was living in a pretty villa in one of the suburbs of the city. The night that I played for my special benefit, thousands of people, some of them carrying lighted torches escorted me to my house, after the performance. In each of the various streets through which I had to go, a band was stationed playing national Brazilian and Italian airs. The roads all strewn with flowers, lighted with beautiful fire-works of a thousand colours.

After I reached my home, the playing of the bands continued until late night.

From Rio Janeiro I went to Buenos Ayres, opening my season, on the 10th of September, with "Medea."

New joys were awaiting me in that delightful country, where the Italian colony is very numerous and true as always to any reminder of their fatherland. I received royal greetings, being particularly proud of those lavished upon me by the inhabitants of Argentina. In the pleasant city of Buenos Ayres, I was the object of such a striking

demonstration, that I still maintain the most vivid remembrance of it. During the month of October, I visited Montevideo, where I received a similar hearty greeting. Then, by way of Rio Janeiro, I sailed for Italy.

In September, 1871, I travelled through the various Danubian Principalities, including Bucharest, Galatz, Braila, Jassy. What an eventful trip it was from the Balkans to Russia! The means of transportation were few and hard to get. We had to cross some lands which did not have even a trace of a path. We hired vehicles of all sorts and shapes, some of them lacking seats where we could safely lie down; but for lack of better ones, we were forced to use these makeshift conveyances.

We made ourselves as comfortable as we could before starting on this journey, but looked like a caravan of immigrants. Some big bells had been attached to the horses of the first carriage, which was the one I occupied, in order that through the darkness of the night they should act as guides to the carriages following. Frequently we were tossed and jerked about so that we had to hold on to the railings of the seats to prevent ourselves from being thrown over on the road, which, owing to its sharp inclines, looked like a frozen stormy sea. It being October, the nights were very cold and though we were wrapped up in cloaks and blankets, with which we were provided, the carriages were uncovered, and we suffered intensely from the cold.

When morning came, our drivers, without giving us any warning, made a halt, unhitching the horses in the middle of the road, and feeding them with hay and oats. Seeing that we could not dream of the luxury of even a hut in which to eat some breakfast, we had to resign ourselves to the situation and imitate the simplicity of our forefathers. Seating ourselves on the bare ground, we spread out our plaids and placed on them the eatables, which we had fortunately taken with us. The originality of our table, the voracious appetite we brought to our repast, after such a cold night, together with the fresh air of the open country and the hearty laughter prompted by the primitiveness of the situation in which we found

ourselves, all contributed to make us enjoy our meal immensely.

Reaching Kishineff, on the 20th, we took up our quarters at the best hotel of the place. What a happy luxury, after our nomadic journey! However, on taking possession of our respective rooms, in order to enjoy a well-deserved rest, we discovered that we had no cause for overmuch rejoicing. Our beds were provided with only a single bedcover. All the servants had retired, so we had to ring a long time and wake up the whole hotel-force, before we obtained what we wanted. At last we went to sleep, but in the middle of the night the screams of a woman woke everybody in the hotel. We listened behind the doors of our rooms, the bells began to ring again, and the domestics ran in every direction. We were informed that the wife of a Russian was creating all this uproar. Her amiable husband was administering a punishment to her which she will long remember. The screaming went on, and, moved with pity and indignation, we sent the strongest man of our troupe to protect the poor woman. The door was locked, but owing to the heavy and repeated knocks or rather blows of the rescuer, who demanded admission, the screaming ceased. Then appeared in the corridor, the woman in petticoats, angry and excited, crying out with a stentorian voice: "What do you want? Mind your business! My husband has the right to beat me if he wishes!"

"If such treatment is salutary for you, please stand it without screaming, we want to sleep, so good night," we replied and laughing we returned to our rooms.

From Kishineff we went first to Odessa and then to Kieff, at the end of 1871, stopping at Berlin, Weimar, and in Belgium, and then on to Rome, where I took quarters for the winter season, wishing to rest for a while after my long trips and the fatigues of stage life. It is well for me to state now, that outside the Danubian Principalities, and Turkey and Greece, which I visited only once, while I visited more than twice the other parts of the world; but when a little rest was granted to me, I always preferred either Paris or Rome as my resting place.

I made my fourth trip to London in 1873.

Not having any new drama to present and being tired of repeating the same productions, I felt the necessity of reanimating my mind with some strong emotion, of discovering something, in a word, the execution of which had never been attempted by others.

At last I believed I had found something to satisfy my desire. The admiration I had for the Shakespearean dramas, and particularly for the character of Lady Macbeth, inspired me with the idea of playing in English, the sleeping scene from "Macbeth," which I think is the greatest conception of the Titanic poet. I was also induced to make this bold attempt, partly as a tribute of gratitude to the English audiences of the great metropolis, who had shown me so much deference. But how was I going to succeed? . . . I took advice from a good friend of mine, Mrs. Ward, the mother of the renowned actress Geneviève Ward. She not only encouraged my idea, but offered her services in helping me to learn how to recite that scene in English.

I still had some remembrance of my study of English when I was a girl, and there is no language more difficult to pronounce and enunciate correctly, for an Italian. I was frightened only to think of that, still I drew sufficient courage even from its difficulties, to grapple with my task. After a fortnight of constant study, I found myself ready to make an attempt at my recitation. However, not wishing to compromise my reputation by risking a failure, I acted very cautiously.

I invited to my house the most competent among the dramatic critics of the London papers, without forewarning them of the object and asked them kindly to hear me and express frankly their opinion, assuring them that if it should not be a favourable one, I would not feel badly over it.

I then recited the scene in English, and my judges seemed to be very much pleased. They corrected my pronunciation of two words only, and encouraged me to announce publicly my bold project. The evening of the performance, at the approach of that important scene, I was trembling! . . . The enthusiastic reception

granted me by the audience, awakened in me all vigour, and the happy success of my effort compensated me a thousandfold for all the anxieties I had gone through. This success still increased my ambitious aspirations, and I wished to try myself in even a greater task. I aimed at no less a project than the impersonation of the entire rôle of Lady Macbeth in English, but such an arduous undertaking seemed so bold to me, that I finally gave up the idea and drove away from my mind forever the temptation to try it.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEPARTURE FOR A PROFESSIONAL TOUR THROUGH THE PRINCIPAL CITIES OF THE WORLD—THE STRAIT OF MAGELLAN—PERU, ITS REVOLUTIONS AND REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE—"CERRA PUERTA!"—VERA CRUZ AND NEW YORK—THE HISTORY OF A NEW-BORN BABE AND HIS FOUR-LEGGED NURSE

IN THE month of May, 1874, we sailed from Bordeaux, France, for a trip around the world. We had with us, besides our children, our old friend General Galletti, a most congenial companion.

This is the itinerary that we planned:

Bordeaux, Rio Janeiro, Buenos Ayres, Montevideo, Santiago (Chili), Valparaiso, Lima, Mexico, Pueblo, Vera Cruz, the United States, the Sandwich Islands, New Zealand, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Ceylon, Aden, Suez, Alexandria (Egypt), Brindisi, Rome.

After having gone so far on this professional tour, in the order mentioned, we sailed from Montevideo, on the 15th of July of the same year, upon the magnificent English steamer *Britannia*, bound for Valparaiso. We crossed the Strait of Magellan, having on one side Patagonia and on the other Terra del Fuego. I should digress too much from my prescribed path, were I to attempt to describe all the emotions I experienced in beholding for the first time these wonderful scenes. I will say only that the delightful weather we enjoyed in spite of all predictions to the contrary, permitted me to gaze upon the ever-changing view with wide-open eyes, bent on being the first one to be able to boast of discovering some spot or thing the like of which we had never seen before. I did not have to wait long to satisfy my desire. I beheld a skiff sailing in the direction of our boat. It contained a whole family of Patagonians. They were very tall people, with olive complexions and long dishevelled hair, as stiff as

hogs' bristles. As far as their characteristic features were concerned, the wide mouth, the prominent cheek bones, and the long white teeth, I found many points of resemblance between this type of men, and my old acquaintances the Redskins, whom I had met during my first long trip to California. I can see even now, those tall Patagonians, badly clothed with dark animal skins, begging, by gestures, that we give them something to eat and to smoke.

Glad to be able to satisfy their wants, we begged the captain to slacken the speed of the steamer, as it is customary for the commander of any boat, but, I do not recollect for what reason, our captain did not wish to do so, though the poor fellows, rowing with all their might, were trying to overtake us. From their gestures we readily understood the imprecations they sent after us, on discovering that their hopes were vain.

Coming out of the Strait, the passing of which took thirty-six hours, we came to Cape Pillar. We found there such a furious sea, that it was difficult for us to stand on our feet. I, as a matter of precaution, had been fastened with a strap to the ring of the upper port-hole over my couch, on which I was lying, when a violent surge of the ship, threw down both myself and my couch, leaving me suspended by the arm from the strap. The pain I felt was too intense to allow me to free myself from that uncomfortable position. The people who came to my assistance, were also staggering owing the rocking of the boat, and presented to the other passengers a funny spectacle. It was in that peculiar position that I was introduced to the "Pacific" Ocean!

On the first of August I made my début at Valparaiso, Chili. My sojourn in that country including Santiago and Quillotta, lasted two months. The favours and warm tokens of admiration I received there, were not any less than those I had been honoured with in other countries.

On the 18th of the following October I was at Lima, the beautiful capital of Peru. There, as in many other places, I opened my season with "Medea." I discovered a most intelligent audience, which lavished upon me a

thousand kind attentions, but I narrowly escaped being the witness of a civil war.

I was far from imagining that among the few cabin passengers on board of the steamer *Britannia*, some of whom landed at Punta Arenas, near the middle of the Strait of Magellan, there was one, who two months later would break the peace of our pacific sojourn at Lima. This person, was a man of rather small stature, and very energetic appearance. He was not talkative and his gruff manners did not say much in his favour. The gossip which ran about him on board, among our small floating colony, was not such as to encourage anybody to get acquainted with him. He called himself Don ——, a Peruvian who had been the head of a conspiracy for the overthrowing of the President of the Republic. His methods of accomplishing his object was nothing less than the blowing up of an entire railway train, which was carrying on board the President of Peru and all the members of his Cabinet, on the occasion of the inauguration of a new branch of some railroad line. Rightly or wrongly, Don —— was accused of being responsible for this outrage and was banished from the Peruvian soil. This dangerous companion of our journey, landed at Coronel, the first halting place of the *Britannia*, in Chili.

We had just reached Valparaiso, when the news was brought to us that Don ——, having been joined by a number of his partisans, had hired a "clipper," and sailed for an unknown destination.

Our delightful sojourn at both Valparaiso and Santiago, had caused us to forget the name of Don —— but when we arrived at Lima, we were apprised that this conspirator had landed, with his men, on the Peruvian coast, and was fomenting a rebellion and fighting at the head of a small army against the soldiers of the Government. Revolutions and counter-revolutions, succeed one another in that country, where the office of president, so eagerly sought, very often costs the life of the ambitious one who has secured it. Such had been the price paid by the majority of the heads of that Government up to the year 1874.

Besides the papers, which every morning brought us the news of the war, we were in possession of a living news-bearer, in the shape of a native servant we had hired to assist our domestics in the fulfillment of their duties. Though his only tasks were to do the marketing and run errands, we had bestowed upon him the pompous title of "Majordomo." After the first war news reached us, it was no longer possible to make him leave the house. With every unfavourable news concerning the Presidential party, our Majordomo, would become frantically tragic, and we were forced to listen to his lamentations.

We could not, at first, understand how this man could confine himself steadily indoors, and after some days, we made up our mind to force him to go out. He armed himself with a sword-cane, with which he told us, he would know how to defend himself, though in appearance he was not very belligerent. "But what's the matter with you?" someone asked him, "you have to go to the market only and not to war." "But don't you know," answered the Majordomo, "the danger that I am threatened with at every street? the Government, needing soldiers, takes them by force, and if they lay their hands on me, I am lost." And it was really so, as we discovered a few days later. A sergeant, together with two soldiers would force every poor fellow he met to enlist, and if the captured one offered any resistance he was lassoed as wild horses are on the plains of Mexico.

Don ——, and his followers were approaching the capital. One morning the President at the head of his troops, left the city of Lima, to go and meet the enemy, which the greater part of the population so greatly feared, leaving only the police force to protect the city. Of all the people in the Capital we were the only ones who were surprised at what was happening, as its inhabitants had been accustomed for a long time to witness events of this kind. One day we went on a very interesting excursion by a railway to Oroyo, which crosses the Andes, connecting Peru with the Amazon River. We ascended to a height of 14,000 feet above the sea level, going through some of the most picturesque zones of vegetation, in which we noticed hordes of wild buffalos, and some captive ones

used to plough the soil. After our return in the evening we were seated at the table, telling to a Peruvian friend who was dining with us, our impressions of the day, when all of a sudden we heard from the street cries of "*Cerra puerta! cerra puerta!*" A woman beside herself, rushed inside of our "patio," shouting: "*Jesus Maria! la revolucion!*" Our courageous Majordomo, even more frightened than the woman, dashed to the door of the house, closed it violently, locked it and fastened it with an iron bar. Urged by our curiosity to find out what the matter was we ran to the windows and noticed that our neighbours had taken the same precaution as our Majordomo. Hearing some shooting at a distance, we prudently withdrew our heads from the windows. "But what is the matter," we asked our host. He, not in the least disconcerted, answered: "It is nothing but a "*Cerra puerta.*" Whenever the President is obliged to leave the city, with its garrison, in order to repress some revolutionary movement, it often happens that those who remain behind begin to fight among themselves. The policemen, who are too few in number to maintain order are instructed before returning to their barracks, to run through the streets crying: "*Cerra puerta*" which means: Close the door. All the inhabitants then, close and lock their outside doors and await patiently the result of the trouble. If you are in the street you run the risk of getting shot, but the dwellings are never invaded. We were able quietly to resume our dinner, but this sublime indifference, did not modify our curiosity and in spite of the advice given to us, we still looked out of the windows. One could neither see nor hear anything. The shooting had ceased. Soon afterward the doors began to be cautiously opened, and the people to peep through, while policemen reappeared in the streets bringing reassuring news. It had been a false alarm, and next came a telegram announcing a great victory of the President's troops over the rebels. "All's well that ends well," Shakespeare says; We opened the door laughing at the tragi-comic interruption of our meal and gaily resumed our seats at the table.

In the Peruvian capital the ladies are very handsome,

good and kind. Page after page, could I fill describing my pleasant recollections of Lima which are still vivid in my memory.

On the 28th of November, we went to Callao, the seaport of Lima, only fifteen minutes by rail from that place, and took passage on board the steamer *Oroya*, bound for Panama. That voyage was a most agreeable and enjoyable one. The sea was calm all the way, thus permitting the poorest sailors of all among our people to sit on deck and enjoy the sight of the pelicans, the albatrosses and other sea birds, flying around our ship, tracing long white and gray lines below the azure sky.

After coasting the islands of Labos de Tierra, and the barren chain of mountains of Silla de Prysta, the scene changed, and we noticed some islands covered with a variegated vegetation, where the finest tropic fruits grow as in a great wilderness.

The isthmus of Panama is a real terrestrial paradise. It is the Eden sung by poets. There, a spreading floral vegetation allures and dazzles one, and a daphne azure sky, but more cloudy than that of Italy, extends above it.

At Panama, we left the *Oroya* and went ashore. In a few hours ride on a railway train, we were transported from one ocean to the other, crossing a marvellous country, which leaves the impression of a fairy scene on the mind of the traveller. However, the high temperature and the heavy atmosphere which fill that region with malaria, were so oppressive that we felt very much relieved on leaving land and going on board the steamer *Saxonia*, a German boat which after a short stop at Curaçao took us to the pretty city of Saint Thomas. On the 16th of December we embarked upon a steamer of the English Line, bound direct to Mexico. The 25th of the same month, after having touched Havana, we found ourselves again on board of the *Ebro*. We sailed smoothly upon the brilliant waters of the Mexican Gulf.

Having come on deck early in the morning of the 25th, each of us felt a sweet and melancholy sensation, while smiling at his travelling companions, during the usual handshake. We were no longer strangers to one another.

If there were any dislikes they vanished away; a common sentiment united us all. We all sighed and longed for something. No wonder! It was Christmas Day! We were separated by thousands of miles from our distant ones at home. Our minds were filled with thoughts which flew about us like a flight of swallows and uniting under that radiant blue sky, formed a cheering breath of sweet remembrance for all our dear ones who were far away from us! Our floating palace was gaily decorated with flowers and flags of all nations. The dining room had changed its usual aspect; the pictures hanging on the walls were covered with holly branches, brought over from England; long multi-coloured silk ribbons hung from the picture frames, holding white placards which bore in large golden letters the inscription: "A Merry Christmas!" Wreaths of flowers were suspended from the ceiling. The captain's table had assumed gigantic proportions. The kind-hearted commander having abolished on this great day all social distinctions, the first and second-cabin passengers mingled, and passed in front of the monumental plum-pudding, prepared for the occasion, by the *chef* of the steamer. At seven in the evening, we were all standing at our seats at the table; the captain recited a short prayer and then seating himself greeted us with the words: "A Merry Christmas to all of you, ladies and gentlemen."

When dinner was over, we all went on deck where there was to be a display of fireworks. One could not imagine anything more fantastic than those bunches of skyrockets breaking in a golden rain through the darkness of that quiet and beautiful night, under a tropical sky and over that sea, covered with silvery reflections, in which our boat left behind a sparkling and glittering trail. The stentorian voices of the sailors broke forth in loud hurrahs! mingled with the names of the different countries represented by the various passengers on board. Such deafening hurrahs! which were lost in the immense solitude of the ocean, but which found an echo in our hearts.

When the fireworks were over, we improvised a ball for the crew and the steerage passengers. The captain

began the dance. The orchestra, composed of a concertina and a trombone, a new and most original combination, was placed under an enormous branch of mistletoe, hanging on a rope over the deck. Lying in our steamer-chairs, we enjoyed the merriment of those good people, joining in their laughter every time a couple passes under the mistletoe, when according to an English custom, the man is granted the privilege of stealing a kiss from his lady partner in the dance.

By midnight all was quiet and silence reigned on board the ship, but we remained for some time longer on deck, silent and ecstatic in contemplation of the beautiful sky from which every star seemed to smile and throw a gleam of kindly light upon us.

I could not make up my mind to return to my cabin. More than ever before, during that Christmas night, I felt moved with profound gratitude toward God who had protected us, in the long trips over the seas, and was now granting us this moment of rest, of calm, and of hope for what was left for us to accomplish. The bell on board, ringing two o'clock, woke me up from my revery. At that moment a sailor passing by me, I exclaimed: "A Happy Christmas to you and all your dear ones at home!" I could not refrain from repeating to him the greeting which a sailor boy had given me in the morning as I was coming out of my cabin.

A very charming reception awaited us at Vera Cruz, Mexico. We were greeted, so to speak, by the whole population of the place, headed by the municipal authorities, who had secured quarters for us and had them all decorated with flowers and fitted with every possible comfort.

I began my season in the City of Mexico on the 31st of December, and there I also met with a most appreciative reception.

On my way to the United States, I played at Puebla and at Vera Cruz. Visiting this latter town for the second time, I was again struck with its mournful aspect. It was not by chance that the explorer Cortez, named that place "The True Cross," in remembrance of his many companions who there fell victims of the yellow fever,

a plague which even now mows down yearly many people in that place. I must confess that my fears of it only ceased when we got on board the French steamer *La Ville de Brest*, bound for New York. This was on the 17th of February. Since the evening before, besides the uneasiness we experienced on account of the heavy north wind, very much feared on that coast, a storm was raging, and constantly increasing in force. Indeed, the next morning the sight of the terribly infuriated sea, fully justified our apprehensions. Some of the actors of our company, together with our luggage, were taken on board early in the morning. The sea was continually growing heavier and heavier, and when the time came for the rest of us to go on board, the boatmen pointed to the high waves which were lashing the shore, and refused to take us to the *Ville de Brest* which we could see at a distance tossing like a nutshell in the middle of the bay. Our prayers and threats were of no avail, and it was only when we offered them twenty dollars for each boat that they found courage to risk rowing us to the steamer. The half-hour seemed a very long time to us, so great was our fear of being swallowed by the raging sea and it was with a sigh of relief that we climbed the little stairway of the ship, with our clothes soaking wet as if we had been dipped in the sea. The captain of the *Ville de Brest*, had had the courtesy to delay the departure of his vessel for an hour, an unusual thing for the captain of a steamer carrying mail to do. A large part of our luggage however, could not be got on board, owing to the absolute refusal of the boatmen to venture with a heavy boat load on that high sea. We had to resign ourselves to leaving it behind us until the next boat, a week after, trusting in our good stars, to find in New York what was most necessary for us, so that we should not be obliged to put off the opening night already announced.

At last we sailed and while moving away, little by little, from the Mexican coast which was gradually fading away under a sad gray sky, a hundred and fifty Sisters of Charity who had been expelled by the Government of Mexico, knelt on deck in spite of the rolling of the vessel, the impetuous wind, and the dashing waves, with a religious

but sorrowful song, and said goodbye to a land where they could no longer lavish the treasures of their charity upon the people. That solemn, mournful picture revealing so many hidden and silent sacrifices, so much abnegation for a most pure ideal, moved us all to pity, and I noticed a sailor near me, with his callous hands wiping a tear from his eye. The voyage to Havana, where the *Ville de Brest* landed, was a most distressing one, and the sea was not in a much more benignant mood during our trip on the *Crescent City*, which took us to New York. Though this boat, while of rather small dimensions, was newly built and of solid construction, the heavy blows of the rolling sea, made it crack every moment, as if knocking against rocks. It was with great satisfaction that we at last reached *terra firma*, and found ourselves in New York, on February 27, 1875.

But as trouble and annoyances never cease, I was for several days very much worried about the balance of the scenery and the costumes which had been left behind and which were needed for the opening night performance. We were compelled to provide ourselves with others which were not well suited to the play. We were inconvenienced thus for a whole month, and every time I went on the stage, noticing that my costumes did not bear out the true historical representation of the rôles, it was harder than usual for me to interpret my part. The cheapness of my cloak would hamper my movement. Even the smallest accessories of the costume of my rôle, were missing. At last, with the arrival of our luggage, my troubles came to an end.

We remained in the United States, from the 27th of February until our departure for Sydney, Australia, meeting everywhere the usual kindness and the expressions of keen appreciation of our professional efforts. My tour in America, came to an end at San Francisco, from whence we were to sail for Australia. Unfortunately, however, the last days of our sojourn in that entrancing place, were saddened by a mournful event.

My brother Caesar who always travelled with me, was struck with a great sorrow. His wife died, giving birth to her first child.

It was out of the question to leave the new-born babe, to the care of an American nurse. The distance and difficulty of communicating from Australia deterred him from doing so. What should we do? How could we find a nurse willing to undertake on so short a notice such a long trip? Somebody suggested an idea, which seemed a capital one. It was to buy a she-goat and take her with us. The day of our sailing, the little four-legged nurse was made the object of our greatest care, but unfortunately, the sea was not equally kind to her. But I am anticipating.

We resolved to sail from San Francisco on the 21st of January, 1876, and had secured accommodations on the steamer *City of Melbourne*. The captain, Mr. Brown, notified me that the steamer would sail at high noon, while the agent of the steamship company had repeatedly assured us that the hour of departure would be 2 P. M. Since early morning everything had been ready. Boxes, trunks, baskets, hand baggage all were on board. At that time there was only one boat a month from San Francisco to Australia. In order not to run any chances, I took special care that everything should be ready in time and had arranged that we should all meet at the dock at the hour indicated to us by the agent. At noon, in company with my daughter and my domestics, I started for the dock, which was only twenty minutes walk from the place where we were staying, and where we expected to meet my husband and my boy. At the entrance of the pier, a crowd of people was waiting to wish me a pleasant voyage, but from the excited signs they were making to us, I understood that something had happened. In fact, they were urging us to hurry, as the boat was about to sail, the hour of departure set by the captain having passed. Imagine my disappointment! I inquired for my husband and my son, and learning that they had not yet appeared, I flatly refused to go on board. The captain losing his patience, gave the order to lift anchor. In vain all the members of our company, already on board, begged him to desist from his purpose. All will understand the anguish I was in. At last, both my husband and child came rushing in, having been notified

of what was happening. But the captain perhaps with the intention of punishing us for our supposed dilatoriness, had merely given an order to execute a feint of departure. When we saw the steamer coming back, how our hearts expanded!

In a great hurry, with the assistance of our friends and acquaintances, we threw on board all the small pieces of baggage and bundles we had with us and jumped on after them, seating ourselves on the first chair that was offered to us, overcome, as we were, with excitement. That terrible state of prostration I was in did not prevent me, however, from casting lowering glances at the captain who would not listen to our arguments of justification. As soon as we left the harbour, the sea being very rough, we were all placed *hors de combat*, and I had to be carried to my cabin.

My brother, who was also ill and no longer in a condition to look after his babe, without warning entered my cabin, where I and my daughter were suffering, laid the babe on my arms and rushed away on deck. The poor little thing began to scream. I was so ill myself, that I could hardly hold him. Fortunately one of the ladies of the company came to my assistance, and carried the poor little fellow to the ladies' parlour, where a cradle had been placed for him.

A few days later, a new trouble arose. The interesting little goat, which had thus far filled her duties of nurse, fell sick and gave no more milk. The reader will easily understand our predicament. Even the sailors were moved to pity. Some offered condensed milk, others some improvised farinaceous liquid, assuring us that it was an excellent food. By listening to them, you would think that every one of them was an experienced baby nurse. We trusted in Providence, however, and did our best to keep the infant from starving to death. Thank God, some of the food offered was suitable for him, so that we were able on reaching Sydney, to land the child there in a fairly good, healthy condition.

Continuing my narrative, I will add that for several days I was angry with our disobliging captain, but noticing the strictness of the discipline

he maintained on board the ship, and the interest he seemed to feel in me and my family, I overlooked his rough manners and his seeming rudeness at the beginning of our voyage and we became the best of friends.

CHAPTER IX

THE KING OF HAWAII IN DRESS-SUIT AND SILK HAT—HIS CLEVERNESS AND HIS COURTESY—NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA—THE END OF MY PROFESSIONAL TOUR AROUND THE WORLD—THE UNEASINESS OF THE ARTIST—STOCKHOLM, THE "VENICE OF THE NORTH"—I ESCAPE FROM A TERRIBLE DANGER—THE STUDENTS OF UPSALA

On the 27th of January we reached Honolulu, in the Sandwich Islands, where we stopped for twenty-four hours. The Italian Consul, the excellent Mr. Schaefer, came to meet us on board and took us to a delightful hotel with a veranda, hidden under the foliage of a tropical vegetation. We were in raptures over the panorama stretched before us, and ready to follow our guide through the charming country surrounding the city. After making our toilet, we saw Mr. Schaefer coming to us with a message from King Kalakaua—an invitation to a luncheon at his palace.

We were happy in the anticipation of seeing the island king in the midst of a court, which we supposed to be more or less grotesque. All the women we had met in the city were dressed alike, in simple multicoloured tunics, their heads ornamented with wreaths of yellow flowers, and all galloping on little ponies and laughing at one another. As to the men, they wore a similar costume and had similar expressions of merriment in their faces.

While awaiting for the appointed hour for luncheon at the palace of the king, we took a long drive down the valley of Paly, a sort of deep and rugged funnel into which Kamehameha I, the so-called Napoleon of the Pacific, threw the conquered soldiers of the princes of the neighbouring islands, and thus succeeded in reigning alone over all the islands. After eight days of lonesome sailing,

it was a delight for us to run through those green and fragrant fields, real jewels of nature, where the many-coloured rose bushes stretched out between one tree and another, interlacing in beautiful wreaths among the leafy branches, loaded with bananas, oranges and fruit of all descriptions. But time was passing and we had hardly enough of it to get back to the city and attend our royal reception.

Still escorted by our kind consul, we entered a beautiful garden, where two aides-de-camp of the King were awaiting us. They were blond, fine-looking young fellows, wearing a uniform like that of European soldiers, adorned with silver embroidery. They led us through a very simple vestibule to the house, a one-story structure. The doors of the reception hall were open, two domestics clad in blue livery trimmed with silver braid, held back the drapery, while we entered a large room upon whose walls hung the portraits of all the monarchs of the world. King Victor Emanuel, from the height of his frame, seemed to welcome us. Quickly our expectations of meeting some "savages" were shattered! When his Majesty Kalakaua moved forward, graciously holding out his hand, our ideas of grotesque savages were dispelled. The King, who was somewhat dark in complexion, was rather tall, wore a Prince Albert coat, and had side whiskers like an Englishman. He had a pleasant physiognomy and the simple manners of a perfect gentleman. He spoke to us in correct English and one of his first questions was whether we liked the two-step better than the old-fashioned waltz. The luncheon was served on fine Sèvres porcelain tableware, and the cutlery was of the finest silver. In order to excuse the absence of the Queen, the King himself condescended to tell us that she was in the woods. That was the only note to remind us of the local "colour." The table was exquisite and the conversation most interesting, as besides our consul, we had with us Judge Allen of the United States, who had been our companion on the steamer from San Francisco.

When lunch was over the King offered me his arm for a tour in the garden, where all the rest of the guests

followed us. In the garden, there was a pavilion from which we heard the strains of our national royal hymn. I was moved by such kind attention. How sweet are such remembrances of our fatherland, in far away countries!

We should have liked to remain longer with his Majesty, if we had not promised to attend a concert which Madame De Murska, a distinguished opera singer and our fellow passenger on the steamer, was giving that night in a public hall of the town. Having dressed for the occasion, we hastened to go to the concert and were just taking our seats, when the King, and the Queen who had "returned from the woods," made their appearance. The Queen had rather pleasant features, and dark complexion. She wore a black dress with a long train, and a wide blue ribbon across her breast. The King wore tight black trousers and patent leather top boots. He held a riding-whip in his hand, which he twirled continually, while seated in his gold-trimmed armchair. All his officers and the ladies of the Queen were of the pure Hawaiian type, though dressed like Europeans.

About midnight, after having enjoyed a good supper at the hotel, we returned to our boat and retired to our cabins. I was undressing when somebody knocked at my door. I opened it to find myself confronted by an aide-de-camp of the king. He was holding in his hand a mysterious package wrapped in a red handkerchief which he unfolded before my eyes. His Majesty remembering what I said at luncheon, regarding the exquisiteness of some of the fruit served, had kindly sent me some. Between two oranges, I found, instead of his card, the picture of his Majesty Kalakaua II, with his autograph. Having emptied the handkerchief, the aide-de-camp folded it up and put it in his pocket, as he took his leave of me.

We sailed away the following day. For two days in succession we met a very stormy sea. Near the coasts of New Zealand it became so dreadful that even the captain began to feel worried, as our boat was of small displacement, only 800 tons. After 22 days of a most

distressing voyage, we arrived at Auckland, New Zealand, where we landed, staying over a whole day. To be able to walk without rolling, to sit at a table which was not rocking, and which was covered with a clean table cloth (such things had been rare in our steamer), to be able to eat some fresh bread, some appetising food, and to dine tranquilly without caring whether a dark cloud should come on the horizon and darken the sun; all these things gave us such a delightful sensation, that we forgot our past inconveniences and all we had suffered on board.

After a good night's rest, we proceeded on our voyage to Sydney, leaving it—with much regret—after a month of continuous performances. I left behind, upon the hills of Port Jackson, some newly made friends to whom I am pleased to repeat my assurance of gratitude for all their kindness.

From Sydney we went to Melbourne, where I played thirty-four times, with the same satisfactory results as at Sydney. I returned to that place on the 11th of October to give my farewell performances. The town of Adelaide happened to be the last station in that delightful country.

It was with the performance of "Mary Stuart," that I closed my series of three hundred and twelve performances, on the evening of the 4th of December 1875, on my first tour around the world. During that most successful professional tour, I travelled 35,283 miles by sea and 8,365 by land. I was on the water one hundred and seventy days, and travelled by rail seventeen days and eight hours. In a word, I left Rome on the 15th of April, 1874, and returned there, by way of Brindisi on the 14th of January, 1876. Hence our trip lasted twenty months and nineteen days.

I must say, however, that although I brought home a treasury of most delightful recollections, a wealth of glorious artistic laurels and unanticipated financial results, the prospect of a definite rest at home was cheering to me. The happiness of being back in my own country, the joy of being again with relatives and dear friends, the privilege of having absolute liberty and

freedom, to live as I pleased (a pleasure I had long been deprived of), and the power to make myself useful to others in performing only for charity; all this was delightful to me and put together should have been sufficient inducements for my retirement from the active professional life.

However, that fever which takes possession of the actor, and against which it is useless to struggle, urged me once again to renounce the so much longed-for rest. In fact, in the month of October, 1876, I resolved to take another trip to Spain and Portugal to fill a professional engagement of three months' duration, which ended in Italy. In the month of October, 1879, I went to Denmark, and very much encouraged in my reception, I returned there the following December.

From Copenhagen I betook myself to Sweden. I enjoyed a most agreeable sojourn at Stockholm, which is rightly called "the Venice of the North."

I found the population in that place ready to be carried away by enthusiasm. King Oscar possesses a most lofty mind and is not only a poet but a worshipper of good music. Among the various foreign languages he is familiar with, I noticed that he was pleased at being able to speak Italian correctly with me.

Among the numerous manifestations of his keen appreciation of my art, I must mention the one he honoured me with on the evening of my special benefit performance.

I was playing "Elizabeth, Queen of England," and his Majesty, with his Court, was present. At the end of the performance, the King, escorted by his children, came to my dressing-room and after having expressed himself in the most kind and flattering terms of appreciation of my art, as a token of his great satisfaction, he handed me a golden decoration, bearing on one side the inscription: "*Litteris et Artibus*"—and on the other the portrait of his Majesty surmounted by the royal crown set in diamonds.

During my tour through Sweden and Norway an accident happened to me which might have proved fatal. The students of Upsala addressed to me a very urgent request to give a performance at their beautiful University.

After having at first refused, I yielded to the temptation to go and play before that young and intelligent audience. My performances at Stockholm were to take place on the 24th and 25th; and on the 27th, I was to go to Gothenborg. At the risk of fatiguing myself beyond my strength, I resolved to sacrifice the only day I had between those dates and play at Upsala on the 26th. I made arrangements for a special train and left hurriedly. After the performance I was escorted to the station by a large crowd which had gathered there to cheer me—I ascended the train in company with my husband and my nephew, Giovanni Tessero, and feeling worn out by the fatigues and the emotions of the evening, I went sound asleep. The country we had to run through was intersected by large canals accessible to big vessels. The railroad goes over some drawbridges, whose control is left at the mercy of employees of the road, who must open and close them alternately to allow either the boats or the trains to go by. At about one in the morning, we were all awakened by a violent shock and by signals of alarm. The train had suddenly stopped before a swinging bridge which was open. We were told that we had almost miraculously escaped from a great danger. A telegram notifying the bridge-tender that a special train would pass by at 12:30, had been despatched, but he understanding it to be 12:30 at noon, and not expecting any train to come during the night had left the swinging bridge open and gone home to sleep. If the engineer, either through prudence or owing to a certain presentiment had not slackened the speed of the train, in a few seconds we would have jumped into that abyss a few feet ahead of us!

It took more than half an hour, before our signals of alarm were heard. Fortunately another bridge-tender, who lived nearby and whose sleep was not too sound, was aroused by our signals; he closed the bridge and the train was able to cross it.

The following day I received a large number of telegrams congratulating me on my escape, which was another proof of the love that those people bore me. I learned later from the Italian Minister, Count La Tour, that the

morning after our departure from Stockholm, the news had been spread that our train had jumped into the canal!

But as a contrast to this lugubrious incident, I will mention one of a happier character.

The delightful Swedish melodies, sung by the young students of Upsala under my balcony, still sound in my ear. It was at the home of the governor where a supper had been given in my honour that I enjoyed this serenade.

The day after, at the moment of leaving Upsala to return to Stockholm, we met in the waiting-room of the station, a wonderful chorus of the students waiting for us. They received us with a merry song, which was followed by many others, gradually growing sad in tone. When we entered our car, those fine young fellows lined themselves alongside it, and when the whistle of the locomotive was heard, they began to sing the celebrated national air *"Necken's Polka,"* which Ambroise Thomas, has so fittingly incorporated among the many jewels included in the death scene of Ophelia, in his opera "Hamlet."

The snow was falling in large flakes, as the train slowly moved away, while that mournful melody was dying out in the distance.

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER X

I PLAY "LADY MACBETH" AND "ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND" IN ENGLISH—THE DIFFICULTY I EXPERIENCED IN ACQUIRING THE RIGHT PRONUNCIATION IN THIS LANGUAGE—MY FAREWELL PERFORMANCE IN PARIS—MY SECOND PROFESSIONAL TOUR TO THE UNITED STATES—I PLAY WITH EDWIN BOOTH—AN ITALIAN ACTRESS WHO PLAYS IN ENGLISH WITH GERMAN ACTORS—THE AMERICAN COMPARTMENT CARS—FAREWELL TO THE READER!

I SPENT a month travelling through Denmark, Sweden and Norway, meeting everywhere the warmest reception.

I returned to those countries in the month of October, 1880, coming down to the South of Europe, I played for the first time at Munich, Bavaria, giving there four performances, which proved to be so many more testimonials of the most valued appreciation. There, more than in any other country, I was honoured by the native German actors, with a fraternal demonstration of kindness.

At the end of that year, I decided not to accept any further engagements, but to enjoy in Rome, the tranquillity of home life. But soon again, I was forced to realise that inactive idleness was not suited to my temperament.

The actor can be compared to the soldier. The former dazzled by his triumphs, sighs continually for the struggles of stage-life; the latter filled with the glory he has acquired on the battlefield, cannot resign himself to peace.

One day, an idea which had been haunting my mind for the last seven years, again took a strong hold upon me. I resumed with great diligence, the study of English. I set to work filled with enthusiasm. With the progress of my study and to the great satisfaction of my teacher, Miss Clayton, my purpose of mastering the language strengthened. Unfortunately, business matters postponed during my absence from home the past summer as

well as many other cares connected with my home duties, continued to interrupt my studies half of the year. Growing impatient of the delays caused by those interruptions, I determined to neglect everything else in order to acquire the correctness and perfection of pronunciation necessary for the stage, little caring for fluency in English in general conversation.

Owing to my determination and daily application I obtained the desired results. I found my study, however, exceedingly hard to master.

That great Greek orator who used to place in his mouth pebbles picked from the seashore in order to correct faults of enunciation was no more resolute in his purpose than myself. In order to master the twisting of my tongue necessary for the pure enunciation of English, I adopted a particular method. On account of the open and closed tones, I would learn upon which of the syllables I had either to raise or lower my voice, and also which of the sounds should be softly or strongly pronounced. With the help of some of the diphthongs used in French, I endeavoured to render those particular sounds of English, which it is so difficult for Italians to acquire. At times I would add to the French diphthongs "eu" or "ou," which helped me in getting the desired sound together with that special intonation so necessary to every language.

At last my purpose was accomplished. Being assured by competent judges of the perfection of my acquisition, I was able to appear on the English dramatic stage and interpret the whole rôle of Lady Macbeth in English on the night of July 3, 1882, at the Drury Lane Theatre, London. The anxiety and the emotion I experienced that evening, I could not describe. Only the splendid success I achieved enabled me to banish all trepidation.

People came to my dressing-room from all over the theatre to congratulate me. Some of my most intimate friends however, had the frankness to tell me, what I knew perfectly well myself, that I had not been able to get rid entirely of my Italian intonation, but they added that its soft melody produced a most pleasing effect on the ear. After a series of performances of "Macbeth," I

produced, also in English, the drama "Elizabeth, Queen of England."

At the first performance, though the audience was very kind, I was not very well satisfied with myself. Having for so many years previously being accustomed to the work of the Italian actors, who well understood the interpretation given to every situation and dramatic effect proper to the Italian school of acting; I was very much preoccupied with the difficulty of the interrupted dialogue of that drama, so different from the sustained method of reading the lines as in "Macbeth;" so that I found myself very much embarrassed. At a certain moment, I felt my courage abandoning me! But strong feeling in regard to my assumed task sustained and saved me. I endeavoured to try not to hear, not to see anything, and finally succeeded in ending my performance with results more satisfactory than I had anticipated. With the following performances, everything proceeded smoothly and each one was better and better. I made a tour through the English provinces, during the months of September, October and November, playing these two English dramas, with most flattering results everywhere. After my return home to Rome, in the year 1883, I had the pleasure during that winter season, of playing several times for charitable purposes.

Toward the latter half of the same year I made another trip to England, playing my English repertoire, with the addition of "Mary Stuart" and "Marie Antoinette."

At that time, I had made an engagement for another long tour through North America, to play in English the dramas which had been so well received in the United Kingdom. I was staying in Paris, awaiting the time for the departure from Havre of the steamer *Saint Germain*, billed for the 18th of October, when I was asked to take part in a performance to be given on the 15th of the same month at the Théâtre des Nations, for the benefit of cholera-stricken people. Other actors of the Comédie Française and some lyric artists, then in Paris, were going to give their services. My baggage was all ready to be shipped and I had none of my Italian actors with me; nevertheless I enthusiastically accepted the invitation

for the sake of assisting both the French and Italian victims of the plague.

My brother Cæsar, who had come to Paris to say good-bye to me, consented to assist me together with an amateur actress, who was happy to assist in the work of charity. I was thus able to get enough characters together to give the sleeping scene from "Macbeth" which requires only three persons. I added to my contribution to the performance the fifth Canto of Dante's Inferno, the episode of Francesca da Rimini. Thus, before leaving Europe I experienced the great satisfaction of finding myself once again, before that generous Parisian public which had procured me the first professional joys of my career away from Italy and opened my triumphal path to dramatic success all over the civilised world.

Two days later I was on board the *Saint Germain* on my way to the United States. At Philadelphia I began with the most auspicious prospects, a series of performances which was continued in the other principal cities of the Union and Canada during a period of seven months.

My contract expired the 4th of May, 1885. Before returning home, I enjoyed the satisfaction of playing "Macbeth," with the renowned actor Edwin Booth, the Talma of the United States. We were able to give but a single performance in New York, on the evening of May 7th, at the Academy of Music. It was a most artistic event and the people came in eager crowds filling that immense hall to its utmost capacity.

Encouraged by such results, the management of the permanent German Dramatic Company, playing at that time at the Thalia Theatre in New York offered me the most alluring inducements, to play on the night of the 12th, Schiller's "Mary Stuart" in English, while the actors of that company who were to be my support should play in German!

At first such a proposition seemed to me a most preposterous one! I knew not a single word of German. Still, I confess that the originality of the scheme was rather tempting. I finally came to the conclusion that by giving a good deal of attention to the expression of the faces of my interlocutors and with an analogous

counterscene at the time when I did not have to speak, I might be able to get along without becoming confused.

After a short hesitation I accepted the offer of the management, and the strange event was witnessed in America, of an Italian actress playing in English with a German support!

At the only rehearsal I went through with the others, I took good care to have the words which were to precede my answers repeated to me in succession, endeavouring to retain their sound in my ear. On the evening of the performance everything went along with regularity, and the performance was very warmly applauded, and strange illusion—the greater part of the American audience left the theatre fully convinced that I was familiar with the German language!

On the 23d of May, 1885, we landed at Southampton. Before leaving the steamer *Fulda*, a magnificent boat of the North German Lloyd line, we wished to send a salute to our dear country, and we gave a toast to the prosperity of Italy and its rulers, King Humbert and Queen Margherita. All the congenial companions of our voyage joined us in our patriotic demonstration.

Although leaving so many sweet remembrances behind us, we were nevertheless happy in beholding again our old Europe, and in coming to the end of a trip of seven months during which we had visited sixty-two cities of the New World. We could not have succeeded in going to so many towns, so far distant one from the other, were it not for the industrial genius which in America has produced so many wonderful things, and paramount to everything else, a comfortable system of travelling which had so facilitated our movements. There are in the United States, companies which rent compartment-cars by the week, which can be attached to a train going in any direction. By their use one avoids the inconvenience of stopping at second-class hotels, such as are apt to be found in small towns, and besides one is not bothered in packing up belongings at every station. One can live in a compartment-car as if in one's own home or on board a yacht. Such a system of locomotion is so well established in the routine of American life, that

everything is prepared at the different stations for night stops and for the provisioning of such cars.

Our compartment-car possessed some particular comforts. The curtains were of heavy silk material. We had on board a piano, a library, a china-closet, pictures and also flowering-plants which accompanied us to the coldest countries. We had hired our rolling-palace for a period of five months, and often spent fifteen days in it without noticing the distances we ran through. When in large cities, we would leave the car to go to some hotel, while the two coloured porters would take care of it.

It was not without much regret that we left upon the soil of the New World that delightful habitation of ours, the comforts of which had prevented our experiencing any fatigue during such long and tiring trips.

The principal events of my professional career are recorded from the impressions of my heart. If by evoking my own recollections I have had to make mention many times of the applause which was so profusely lavished upon me, it is because my personal reminiscences are identified with those of my success, and above all, because in recalling the latter I feel a most legitimate sense of pride, attributing the greater part of the homage paid me, at home and abroad, as a splendid tribute of appreciation of Italian Dramatic Art.

The readers of these "Memoirs" of mine, will easily notice that I have set aside every pretension to ability as an author and discarded all attempts of an elaborate literary style. I have put in these memoirs my impressions with that spontaneity which has guided all my actions through my professional life, as it has directed the expression of my thoughts.

As there is an old saying which teaches us that every written page contains something which is good, so I dare hope that the happenings of my life, which began so modestly, and the struggles I went through, may serve as an example for the young, who, possessing a serious vocation for the stage, attempt to overcome the difficulties of the arduous career of the actor.

And now farewell to all! I have only one other duty to fulfil, and that is to stretch out a friendly hand to all those who have followed me across the two worlds, and to those who have so kindly assisted me and contributed so generously to my triumphs!

PART II

ARTISTIC AND DRAMATIC STUDIES

CHAPTER I

MARY STUART—A TRAGEDY BY SCHILLER

As THE main object of this work is to benefit dramatic art, it is not my intention either to enter into any dissertation on the subject of this tragedy or to discuss the contrary opinions given forth during almost three centuries by renowned authors, as to the innocence or guilt of the unfortunate Mary Stuart. I shall limit myself to saying that the persecutions this martyr had to suffer seemed to me so clear and authentic that they served as a guide and inspiration to my understanding interpretation of the character.

The facts to which I intend to make allusion only succeeded in strengthening my conviction that Mary Stuart was the victim of her exceptional beauty, of the fascination she exercised upon others and of her fervent Catholicism. She was only guilty of weaknesses which would have been unobserved in any other woman, but which were very much exaggerated by those who were interested in the ruin of Mary Stuart. No allowance whatever was made either for her youth or the times in which she lived; and out of her seeming lightness of character, her enemies formed the base of that frightful edifice which subsequently crushed her. It is my full conviction that the accusations against her were a source of much suffering to her, and particularly the accusation of the murder of her husband which in the interest of her persecutors was rendered more heinous by enlargement of details and the thousand revolting denunciations by which it was accompanied. I believe that baseness, wickedness and deceit conspired together to bring about the downfall of the unhappy Queen of Scots.

Everyone knows that in order to place Mary Stuart beyond any possibility of refuting the perfidious accusations which were hurled against her, she was held a

prisoner for nineteen years, during which time the unhappy queen, with letters, protests and most heart-rending petitions, was uselessly asking that she be granted the privilege of justifying herself before Queen Elizabeth and before the Parliament, regarding the vile calumnies of which she was the victim, but such a privilege was never granted to her. This is an evident proof that her accusers were afraid that Mary would succeed in convincing the people of her innocence.

How could she defend herself? What means, what power could she oppose to so many factions united to ruin her? Her voice was never listened to. Every kind of defence was denied to her. At every step she took, she saw herself dragged through the most devilish snares. During her life of forty-four years she was for nineteen years held in a most humiliating and painful captivity. It is without any question, as many of her historians assert, that the behaviour of the unfortunate princess was spotless from her birth to the death of the Earl of Darnley. Is it possible to conceive that a gentle, cultured and prepossessing person like Mary Stuart, gifted as she was with all the qualities which render a woman highly estimable, would suddenly renounce all her virtues, to become the victim of vice and accomplish wickedness worthy of such a hardened criminal, as her enemies wished to make her appear?

All these considerations caused that sympathy with which I was filled for the unhappy queen to grow in me. It is for this reason that I have given to the study of this character all the impulses of my soul, in order to strongly bring out the nobility of the nature, the dignity of the despised queen, the sufferings of the oppressed victim and the resignation of the martyr. I was led to this by the careful study I made of the historical period in which that unfortunate woman lived and died. Her existence was identified with the investigations that I have also made regarding the life of Queen Elizabeth.

Before undertaking my analysis, I hope it may not displease the reader to learn under what circumstances I began the study of this most important work.

Who will ever believe that the interpretation of a

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FREDERICK JOHANN VON SCHILLER
Famous German poet. (1759–1805)

character so difficult as that of Schiller's Mary Stuart could be entrusted to a young girl of eighteen, who, for the first time, was assuming the part of the leading lady? Still that happened with me.

If the director—now called the manager—of an Italian Dramatic Company books an actress that he considers apt, owing either to her looks or to her dramatic talent, to take the parts of the leading lady, he cares little if her looks be not in accord with the age of the character she is to represent.

When I ended my engagement with the Royal Sardinian Company, (as I have already mentioned in my Memoirs) I took the position of absolute leading lady with the Company of Romualdo Mascherpa, in the service of the Duchess Marie Louise, of Parma.

Although the studies I went through during the consecutive years that I was a member of the Royal Company had given me a good deal of experience of the stage, still the rôles of leading lady intrusted to me were not suited to my youth.

When my father booked me with Mascherpa, he took into consideration that at that time tragedies were rarely played by travelling companies, and that, therefore, I did not run any chance of having to assume a rôle or a responsibility beyond my powers. Contrary to these expectations, without paying any regard to my short experience and my youth, my new manager intrusted to me at once rôles of the most important and serious character and which are usually assigned to a leading lady of long experience.

Signor Mascherpa was an excellent old man of the old school, but not exactly an authority in artistic judgment. He knew that he was using his own right to intrust to me all the rôles for which he had booked me; consequently, "I had to know how to render them."

He began by assigning to me some of the most important parts, and they were such that though the repertoire of one dramatic company was about the same as that of another, my teacher, Madame Marchionni, who was no longer very young, had given up many rôles, and as I never had the opportunity to see her play them, I was not

given even the advantage of imitating her. In the city of Turin when they asked me to study the rôle of Mary Stuart I saw myself lost! Even the growing appreciation of the public was not sufficient to encourage me, as I attributed my success mostly to my looks and youth, nor was the encouragement of my relatives and my intimate friends sufficient to reassure me. Still, in order to fulfil the obligations I had assumed, I had forcibly to yield, recommending myself to all my protecting saints for the success of the undertaking. With the greatest zeal, and without any delay, I not only began to learn the lines of Andrea Maffei—the translator of the tragedy of Mary Stuart into Italian—but I also read many passages of history in relation to the unhappy queen.

I had been granted a very short time to accomplish my task. Besides, I had to provide myself with the appropriate costumes. During the period of time I had passed with the Royal Sardinian Company, I had played some small tragic parts, but never one as important as this. It is true, that they were always telling me, that I possessed all the necessary qualifications for the interpretation of tragic rôles, and added that I would become proficient with study and practice. Nevertheless, I never should have thought that they would initiate me by such an apprenticeship.

The night preceding my first performance, as all may imagine, I did not close an eye. I felt feverish and unequal to the task. It seemed as if I were already before the audience and that I heard it grumble about my inefficiency. All the eyes I saw directed at me were like sharp points torturing me. If for a minute I could abandon myself to sleep, I saw the strangest and most oppressive visions. Under the horrible incubus, it seemed as if I heard murmuring from every direction: "Poor child, she will never be up to the task!" And the curtain would come down slowly in the midst of a general silence—not even a friendly hand would applaud me. Then I felt my heart violently palpitating; big drops of perspiration covered my forehead. My dear mother, always good and caressing, came and woke me up from that painful sleep. The light of the sun dissipated my sad

thoughts, and the terror of which I was a victim ceased to oppress me.

The dreaded evening of the performance came! The audience was conscious of my trepidation; it knew all the efforts I had gone through, and was disposed to be indulgent. On making my appearance upon the stage, the public noticed the care I had taken in studying my character, a precaution that, owing to the customs of Italy at that time, was generally much neglected.

My bearing, the costume I wore, my strictly historical make-up, the oval shape, and the pallor of my face—the latter due to the fear which oppressed me—my blonde hair, all of which portrayed so well the unhappy queen, caused me to enlist from the start the sympathy of the audience, which, with uproarious applause, encouraged me and made me feel certain of its indulgence.

I acted my best, and the audience was most appreciative, especially at the end of the third act, which is the climax of the play. When the curtain dropped, I was called out several times and the most flattering exclamations of enthusiasm were repeated to me from every direction. It seemed to me as if I had conquered the world, and I was certain that my manager would be proud of my work and would hasten to encourage me, expressing to me his perfect satisfaction at the great success of this trial performance.

The reader may easily imagine how I felt, when seeing him I said with childish eagerness: "I hope you are pleased with me!" and the good old gentleman, shrugging his shoulders, frowning and with an indulgent smile, answered me this: "Listen, my dear child, you have a marked tendency for comedy; but tragedy, let me tell you, is not exactly suited to you. Therefore I advise you to give it up entirely."

It is true that I was inclined to comedy, but I believed that later I should also succeed in tragedy! Hearing the manager I was petrified! Certainly I had not then interpreted that rôle as I later perfected it after careful and profound study, still it seemed to me that my interpretation had not deserved such discouraging advice.

It was then that I effectually persuaded myself of the

importance of the expression of the face, the bearing and the carriage that I should have in presenting myself on the stage under the rôle of that unhappy Queen of Scots. My face had to bear the expression of a woman in whom torture and persecution had not been able to efface that force of character with which she stood her martyrdom during the second part of her existence.

Thus invested, without losing control of myself, and with resigned and patient expression, I would listen to Hannah Kannedy tell how Paulet had brutally broken the queen's chest, taken the papers away, the jewels and even the crown of France, which Mary Stuart was most jealously preserving as a remembrance of her past greatness; moreover, for the sake of proving that earthly power had no longer any claim upon her, the queen would say:

"Compose yourself, my Hannah! and believe me,
'Tis not these baubles which can make a queen:
Basely indeed they may behave to us,
But they cannot debase us. I have learnt
To use myself to many a change in England;
I can support this too." . . .

Act I, Scene ii.

Then, addressing myself to Paulet, in a calm and dignified manner I would go through that short scene I had with him; and to the disdain of Hannah who could hardly bear to see me treated with so much roughness by my jailer, I would oppose an angelic patience. It was due to the profound conviction I felt of the innocence of Mary, that I could say without any emphasis the verses in which Schiller causes Mary to accuse herself of complicity in the murder of Lord Darnley (one can notice that he was led into error by the historians Hume and Buchanan, who were prejudiced against Mary Stuart). Through the scene of Mary with Mortimer, I could show that from time to time a ray of hope had come to clear the clouds of her awakened existence, causing her to perceive the possibility of liberation. But on turning her gaze around at the sight of the gloomy walls which encompassed her, the consideration of her misery would dissipate that flash of light which for a moment had penetrated her soul and deceive her.

My heart opened freely in the presence of Mortimer, perceiving in him my consoling angel sent to me by God in order to set me free, while in the following scene my behaviour was different at the sight of the perfidious Cecil Burleigh, the perverted adviser of Queen Elizabeth.

At his approach, followed by Paulet, I assumed again all the haughtiness of my rank in order to confound and lower the arrogance of my persecutors. Hearing myself accused by Cecil—in an insolent tone—of the complicity in the conspiracy of Babington, and of rebellion against the laws of England, I assumed all the just haughtiness of the offended queen, of the calumniated woman, of the oppressed stranger, and I would answer:

"That ev'ry one who stands arraign'd of crime
Shall plead before a jury of his equals:
Who is my equal in this high commission?
Kings only are my peers." . . . . .
Act I, Scene vii.

(Historical words) While Burleigh was telling me that I had already heard the accusations of the tribunal; that I was living under the British sky and breathing its air; that I found myself under the protection of the British laws, and therefore I had to respect its decrees—I would turn suddenly to him, and, looking him straight in the eyes with a frowning gaze, full of wrath, would say with a bantering smile:

"Sir, I breathe
"The air within an English prison's walls:
Is that to live in England; to enjoy
Protection from its laws? I scarcely know
And never have pledg'd my faith to keep them.
I am no member of this realm; I am
An independent, and a foreign queen—"
Act I, Scene vii.

Continuing in the same tone of voice, I refuted, one by one, all the shameful and false accusations that he threw at me. But at last, noticing that my denials and defence were useless, in a voice which betrayed my emotion, and

which I had intentionally repressed to that moment, I gave the lines:

"I am the weak; she is the mighty one;
'Tis well, my Lord; let us use her pow'r;
Let her destroy me: let me bleed, that she
May live secure: but let her confess
That she hath exercised her pow'r alone,
And not contaminate the name of justice."
Act I, Scene vii.

The author protracts this scene intentionally in order to allow the passionate tension of Mary to be extended. By interrupting its execution, I would follow with my accent, with my expression, the run of the scene until all my bitterness would overflow with the words:

"Let her not barrow the laws, the sword
To rid her of her hated enemy:
Let her not clothe, in this religious garb,
The bloody daring of licentious might:
Let not these juggling tricks deceive the world."
Act I, Scene vii.

Then, giving full swing to my indignation, turning with a contemptuous expression to those who seemed anxious to humiliate my royal power, I would say:

"Though she may murder me, she cannot judge me:
Let her no longer strive to join the fruits
Of vice with virtue's fair and angel show;
But let her dare to seem the thing she is."
Act I, Scene vii.

Thus the reader may imagine, better than I can express, what a crushing look I threw at Lord Burleigh while rapidly leaving the stage.

In the third act is evidently demonstrated how even a noble and lofty soul, filled with religious faith, accustomed to suffer and resigned to all the blows of misfortune, may forget herself, lose her self-control and be transformed into another being, when insolence and perversity overstep the bounds of human patience.

Followed by my faithful Hannah, I entered the stage with long hurried strides, filled with joy, feeling exhilarated by the balmy air of the park, which, caressed my face, and infused a new vigour into my wearied body.

Fully absorbed in the situation, and wishing to incite the spectators to feel the emotion that I felt, I portrayed the merriment with which I was filled at that moment, to mark more strongly the desolating and bitter contrast of the atrocious pains and indignities which I was at other times called upon to suffer. And in order to demonstrate the reasonableness and the truth of this interpretation, it will suffice to follow with one's thought the reading of these lines:

"Freedom returns! O let me enjoy it,
Let me be childish, be childish with me!
Freedom invites me! O let me employ it,
Skimming with winged step light o'er the lea;
Have I escaped from this mansion of mourning?
Holds me no more the sad dungeon of care?
Let me, with joy and with eagerness burning,
Drink in the free, the celestial air!"

Act III, Scene 1.

So much abandon, so much sweetness had soon to give place to the most terrible emotions. At the announcement granting me a meeting with Elizabeth (which is entirely and skilfully imagined by the dramatic genius of Schiller, and which forms the climax of this act), I changed suddenly my composure, I trembled, I wished to move away, and nothing could better describe the reality of my state of mind, than the following verses which I answered the words of Talbot, who was using his ability to persuade me to have a meeting with my rival:

"For years I've waited, and prepared myself,
For this I've studied, weigh'd and written down
Each word within the tablet of my mem'ry,
That was to touch, and move her compassion.
Forgotten suddenly, effac'd is all.
And nothing lives within me at this moment,
But the fierce, burning feeling of my wrongs,
My heart is turn'd to direct hate against her;
All gentle thoughts, all sweet forgiving words
Are gone, and round me stand with grisly mien,
The friends of hell, and shake their snaky locks."

Act III, Scene ii.

Then, being struck by the persuasive words and affectionate advice of Talbot, to induce me to meet Elizabeth

with a serene mind, but still filled with deep sadness, I say:

"We never should have seen each other—never!
O, this can never, never come to good."
Act III, Scene iii.

Being very much disturbed also by the presence of Burleigh, my most bitter enemy, when I learn that Leicester alone accompanies Elizabeth, I repeat that name with a cry of joy. When the queen arrives, I withdraw quickly to the back of the stage, hiding myself among the plants, though in a position for observation in order to scrutinise the face of my persecutor. After that, having heard the words of Elizabeth, who pretends that she is addressing them to her suite, and which she accentuates with bombastic vanity with the evident object of making the unhappy prisoner know the love that her people felt for her, I exclaim with an air of great sadness:

"O God; from out these features speaks no heart."
Act III, Scene iv.

In the meanwhile, both Hannah and Talbot, with entreating signs, are encouraging me to approach and prostrate myself at the feet of Elizabeth, though I am feigning a strong resistance. Yielding at last to their repeated requests, with an evident effort and uncertain step, I approach the queen to kneel down before her, making it very evident how much it costs my dignity to perform that act.

Hardly has my knee touched the soil, than respect for myself makes me incapable of enduring such a humiliation, causes me to draw back quickly with disdain, as if I were saying: "No, I cannot," and fall back in the arms of Hannah. She, kneeling down, endeavouring to persuade me not to persist in my refusal, makes appeal to my religious faith and to the force of circumstances.

Then, with an effort at self-control I affectionately cause my faithful nurse to rise, showing my innate aversion to what she asks of me, and say with a sigh:

"Well be it so: to this will I submit,
Farewell high thoughts, and pride of noble mind!"
Act III, Scene iv.

Then with the intonation of voice suited to the following verses, I add:

"I will forget my dignity, and all
My sufferings; I will fall before her feet,
Who hath reduced me to this wretchedness.'

After such virtuous resignation, my eyes raised to Heaven, pressing against my heart the crucifix attached to my rosary which hangs by my side, I offer to God the sacrifice of my dignity, and collecting myself for a few moments, as if invoking the Lord to give me courage, with a firm voice and in a quiet tone I would say to Elizabeth:

"The voice of Heav'n decides for you, my sister;
Your happy brows are now with triumph crown'd."

Then, suddenly stopping, I express with marked hesitation how painful it is for me to raise the pride of my implacable enemy by lowering myself before her in the presence of her courtiers; but as with an instantaneous inspiration, kneeling vehemently down, I say:

"I bless the Power Divine, which thus hath rais'd you,"

It is evident, that the author, in this most happy passage, wishes to show the public that it is not to Elizabeth, but to the Supreme Being, that Mary is humbling herself.

After a short pause, with a supplicating intonation, I continue:

"But in your turn be merciful, my sister;
Let me not lie before you thus disgraced;
Stretch forth your hand, your royal hand, to raise
Your sister from the depth of her distress."

With a sign of royal condescension from Elizabeth I rise sadly sighing. Then in a submissive and resigned tone of voice I answer her accusations and, recounting the catalogue of injustices suffered, I call God to witness, being forced to accuse her in spite of myself, and show her that she has been neither pitiful nor just to me; that though I am her equal, she, trampling on the rights of the people and of hospitality, and taking no heed of my appeal for assistance, has inclosed me in a living tomb

has taken my friends and servants away, and as a crowning ignominy, has dragged me before some insolent courts. Then, after a motion of resentment that Elizabeth makes at this point I change my language, which has gradually grown embittered, and add:

"Now stand we face to face; now, sister speak;
Name but my crime. I'll fully satisfy you."

But the inhuman Elizabeth cannot refrain from saying to Mary;

"My better stars preserv'd me. I was warn'd,
And laid not to my breast the poisonous adder!
Accuse no fate! your own deceitful heart
It was, the wild ambition of your house:
As yet no enmities had pass'd between us,
When your imperious uncle, the proud priest,
Whose shameless hand grasps at all crowns, attack't me,
With unprovoked hostility, and taught
You, but too docile, to assume my arms,
To vest yourself with my imperial title."

. . . . . .

Mary, hearing the offensive way in which Elizabeth speaks of the Pontiff, and learning that she attributes faults to herself that she has never committed, conspiracies in which she never has taken any part, turns her eyes upward saying:

"I'm in the hand of Heav'n!"

Then, addressing herself to Elizabeth:

"You never will
Exert so cruelly the pow'r it gives you."

—"And who shall prevent me?"

She answers in an arrogant tone of voice.

Not a single one of the passages of this great scene was neglected by me to that I might make people understand the crucial pain I was suffering in enduring the indignity of Elizabeth's procedure, at times imploring, with my gestures, the help of Heaven, now imploring, with my look, some comfort from Talbot, whom I held responsible for the unjust provocation of my rival. Still my soul

was ready to rebel when she comes to the malignant words:

"Force is my only surety; no alliance
Can be concluded with a race of vipers."

Listening to such words I simulate a fainting spell. I stagger. . . . Hannah and Talbot run quickly to my assistance; with expressive gestures I affably thank them, begging them not to leave me alone, showing that I have recovered from the prostration with which I had been for an instant assailed. But feeling fully convinced by the bitter and sneering tone, with which Elizabeth so insolently attacked me, that it is vain to hope that she will recognise not only my innocence, but even my legitimate rights, and persuaded that it is necessary for me to renounce them for ever, I slowly turn my head toward her, and with a long penetrating look, accompanied by a light ironical smile which meant: "You cowardly abuse the power that makes you mighty toward the conquered one!" while an impetus of revolt against my unhappy lot urges me to ask God, with a bitter expression, if I have merited such a terrible punishment! Still the religious sentiment resuming its place in my mind, I ask the Lord for forgiveness for my uncontrollable transport, and, sighing, I bend my head with resignation like a creature which gives in to a superior force, and, offering my martyrdom to God, with a noticeable effort, but in a dignified way, I resume:

"O sister, rule your realm in peace:
I give up ev'ry claim to these domains—
Alas! the pinions of my soul are lam'd;
Greatness entices me no more; your point
Is gain'd; I am but Mary's shadow now—
My noble spirit is at last broken down
By long captivity: you've done your most
On me; you have destroyed me in my bloom!
Now, end your work, my sister; speak at length
The word, which to pronounce has brought you hither;
For I will ne'er believe, that you are come,
To mock unfeelingly your hapless victim.
Pronounce this; say Mary, you are free:
You have already felt my pow'r, learn now
To honour too, my generosity."
. . . . . .

Penetrating the conception of the poet who has analysed the character of that unhappy creature, I interpreted the

above passage showing resentment and pathos, as if the humble intonation of the word was the expression of a flying hope to be able to move to pity my rival. Therefore, I pronounce in a most affectionate tone:

"O Sister"

with the hope of succeeding in moving her heart.

But the character of Elizabeth, according to the intention of the poet and the requirements of the history, should never change. During the pathetic invocation of Mary, she assumes an air of such contemptuous disdain, and looks so sharply, with such an icy expression, at her victim, that Mary says:

"For the realms encircled by the deep
Would I exchange my present lot for yours."

This just and natural outbreak, far from shaking Elizabeth, only serves to increase her wrath, and leads her to give vent more vehemently to the aversion she feels for Mary. Then, without any reserve or any consideration for the rank of her oppressed rival, she attacks her with brutal satisfaction, and as if to remind her of the prestige she has lost questions her:

"No more assassins
Now on the road? Will no adventurer,
Attempt again, for you, the sad achievement?"

Listening to such an outrageous insult, a flush of blood rushes to my face, and I act as if about to throw myself upon her, exclaiming:

"Oh Lord! . . . Sister . . . "

but both Talbot and Hannah run to me, hold me back and quiet me; then making a superhuman effort to control my wrath, I rapidly and convulsively press my rosary upon my chest, crying:

"Grant me forbearance . . . . . ."

It is the predominating religious sentiment which almost immediately quenches my aggressive spirit. In order to keep up the contrast of our sentiments, Elizabeth looks at me with crushing disdain, scoffing at Lord Leicester for having often proclaimed that one could not

look at Mary without being punished, as her beauty could not be compared to that of any other woman on earth; and in order to carry her perfidy to a climax, with a sneering smile she says:

"She who to all is common, may with ease
Become the common object of applause."

At such a hideous outrage, my long-repressed wrath overflows and I cry:

". . . . . this is too much!"

And as the wicked mind of Elizabeth is not yet satisfied, in a diabolical voice she adds:

". . . . . You show us now, indeed,
Your real face, till now 'twas but the mask."

At this point, I want to speak, but cannot, owing to the paroxysm of rage, which has discoloured my face and caused my body to tremble all over. Then, with great difficulty and in a suffocating voice, interrupting myself, I begin my invective:

"My sins were human, and the faults of youth;
Superior force misled me. I have never
Denied or sought to hide it: I despis'd
All false appearance and became a queen!"

Then, taking courage, and showing that I am giving vent to the hatred long repressed, and wishing to return insult for insult to the one who has so wilfully humiliated me in the presence of all, I proceed:

"The worst of me is known, and I can say,
That I am better than the fame I bear."

Then moving near her I would add:

"Woe to you! when, in time to come, the world
Shall draw the robe of honour from your deeds
With which they arch—hypocrisy has veil'd
The raging flames of lawless secret lust!"

And, showing that my paroxysm of fury has reached its height, in a strong voice, and with darting glances, I cry:

"Virtue was not your portion from your mother;
Well know we what it was which brought the head
Of Anne Boleyn to the fatal block! . . . ."

I would then remain motionless, casting piercing glances at Elizabeth, and making those present comprehend that I had reached the height of my joy, in having succeeded in my turn in humiliating my enemy. Elizabeth being deeply wounded by my audacity casts furious glances at me, while both Paulet and Leicester run to her to endeavour to soothe her anger, while Talbot and Hannah, frightened though they be, advance toward me. The former, with authority becoming his age and with the devotion he has shown me for many years, interposes the following reproof:

> "Is this the moderation, the submission
> My Lady? . . . . . ."

to which, feeling beside myself I answer:

> ". . . . Moderation! I've supported
> What human nature can support: farewell,
> Lamb-hearted resignation, passive patience,
> Fly to thy native heaven; burst at length
> In all thy fury, long-suppressed rancour!
> And thou, who to the anger'd basilisk
> Impart'st the murderous glance, O, arm my tongue
> With pois'n darts! . . . . . ."

During this speech everyone is moving toward Elizabeth trying to persuade her to pass out . . . while I, raging and endeavouring to think of a more terrible insult than those I had already thrown at her, and again facing her, and without further restraint, I cry:

> ". . . . . A bastard soils,
> Profanes the English throne! The generous Britons
> Are cheated by a juggler (whose whole figure
> Is false and painted, heart as well as face!)
> If right prevail'd, you now would in the dust
> Before me lie, for I'm your rightful monarch!"

While uttering these words I stand erect in a menacing posture.

Elizabeth, then ridding herself from the grasp with which Talbot and Leicester try to hold her, endeavours to throw herself upon me, but with an imposing mien of *lèse majesté*, I point her to the exit, and Elizabeth with much hesitation and forcibly torn away by her courtiers slowly moves out. Seeing her go, I feel that

I have conquered her, and grasping the hand of Hannah in a transport of joy, coming forward to the footlights, I say:

". . . . . Gone hence in wrath!
She carries death within her heart! I know it.
Now I am happy, Hannah, and, at last
After whole years of sorrow and abasement
One moment of victorious revenge!"

I then leave the stage, with long strides, followed by Hannah.

From the remarks made here, the reader will understand that in representing this third act, the most striking feature of the drama, I above all endeavoured to bring into striking contrast the different characters of the two queens, who were at the same time rivals, one unhappy, the other most powerful and already conscious of the wicked purpose of slaying her victim.

In order to appreciate to its full extent the justice of this interpretation, it is well to remember what has been already mentioned, that is, that the meeting of the two queens was boldly introduced by the author, in order to have the chance of taking advantage of the dramatic effect produced by such contrasts; and for the sake of making a conspicuous feature of the loftiness of the nature of Mary, who knew herself to be a queen.

I took care to bring into marked relief the religious sentiment with which Mary was pervaded, a most essential manifestation, which could not be detached from the excited state of mind of the woman.

As the reader knows, Mary Stuart does not appear in the fourth act of the drama. But before I begin my analytical study of the fifth act, it is justifiable to precede it by telling the reasons which have induced me not to take into consideration all the indications of Schiller, concerning the costumes which Mary Stuart should wear in the fifth act.

The opinions concerning the dress that the miserable Mary Stuart should wear in the act of her execution, are very contradictory. Therefore, I feel justified in stating that the cause of all this diversity of views is based upon the fantastic imagination of painters and writers. There

are some who send her to death dressed entirely in black, others, dressed with royal pomp, and Schiller would have her don a majestic white robe ornamented with jewels, with her royal crown on her head, and covered with a black veil, while holding a crucifix in her hands.

Concerning this last mentioned attire, one must remember that Mary Stuart was a prisoner from the age in which the impressions of grief are the most profound—that she was hurled from the height of greatness into an abyss of misery: that she had endured nineteen years of torture, of anguish, of tears—and was reduced to such a state of weakness as to be obliged to ask the good Lord Melville to help her to ascend the steps on her way to the scaffold, her weakness being caused by the swelling of her knees, a result of the unhealthy condition of the different prisons in which she had been kept a martyr. It is scarcely admissible, or possible, then that she should still maintain the sense of feminine vanity and still think of making an impression with her beauty on those who are to see her for the last time.

In the second place, Mary would not have been able to adorn herself in that way without the consent of Elizabeth. Can one think it at all probable that a woman with the temperament of that queen would allow her rival to make a display of those qualities which had, above all, been the cause of hatred and persecution of her? Even admitting such an hypothesis, it is not to be presumed that Mary would have requested so much.

These are the convictions I formed myself, from the first days I began to study the very difficult character of Mary Stuart.

In fact, from my first appearance, at the age of eighteen, in the rôle of the unhappy queen, I have adopted the costumes which seemed to me to be the most logically historic. Owing to a fortunate circumstance I found myself in London in 1857, at the time when, under the patronage of H. R. H. Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria, the Archæological Institute, of London, was holding a large exhibition of all souvenirs and relics of the unfortunate Mary that could be gathered. I had the good luck to be able to visit that exhibition. There

ADELAIDE RISTORI AS MARY STUART

were there several objects which had belonged to Mary Stuart up to the time of her last day on earth, which had been preserved by some old Scottish Catholic families devoted to the memory of the unhappy Mary. Among the various articles, one could see a white and blue enamelled rosary—and for the sake of the scenic effect I had one similar made entirely of gold; and also an imitation of the veil she wore ascending the scaffold, which was woven of gold and white silk ornamented at the edge by narrow white lace, with the royal arms in each of the four corners.

Among the numberless pictures which represent her in various attitudes, and whose authenticity is incontestable, as they were executed a few days after her death, there is one which impressed me and which even now I see with my mind's eye. It represents her execution at Fotheringay, and is attributed to the painter Mytens.

She is standing and wears a black velvet dress, surmounted by a sort of bodice without sleeves, according to the custom of the time.

A white scarf is around her neck. She wears on her head a white lace hood of the shape which has taken her name, and she is covered to her feet by the white veil, of which I have already spoken. A little ivory crucifix hangs from her neck and two small chains unite her bodice under her bosom. In a word, that was the costume I had selected, with the exception that I had substituted a black veil for the white one over the hood, that seeming to me more appropriate for the scenic effect.

In that remarkable picture, she holds a crucifix in her right hand, at the lower end of which is a skull. Mary Stuart, while stretching out her arm, holds the sacred image, leaning on the table, upon which the artist has represented the final scene of her martyrdom. In this one, we see Mary kneeling on the scaffold. They had removed the bodice of her dress, and it is, perhaps, the damask vest of various colours that she wore beneath, which may have given rise to the fantastic imaginations I have mentioned. From the neck, which had already received the first blow of the axe, runs a rivulet of blood.

The executioner is in the act of inflicting the second blow. Many Lords are present at the execution and also other characters. At the rear you can discern the faithful Maries, dressed in mourning.

Three Latin inscriptions complete the picture. The first on the right upper corner says:

"Reginam serenissimam regum filiam uxorem et matrem astantibus commissariis et ministris R. Elis. carnifex secure percutit atque uno et altero ictu truculenter sauciatae tertio caput ascindit."

(The executioner with one or two blows of the axe wounds the most serene Queen, the daughter, the wife and mother of Kings, in the presence of Commissaries and Ministers of the Queen Elizabeth, and with a third blow he cruelly severs the head from the body.)

The second inscription under the effigy which represents the execution reads:

"Maria Scotiae Regina Angliae et Hiberniae vere princeps et haeres legitima Jacobi Magnae Britanniae Regis mater, quam suorum haeresi vexatam, rebellione oppressam, refugii causa verbo Elis. Reginae et cognatae inixam in Angliam an. 1568 *descendentem* 19 *annos captivam perfidia detinuit: milleque calumniis Senatus Angliae sententia haeresi instigante neci traditur ac* 12. *Calend. Mart.* 1587 *a servit carnifice obtruncatur an. aetat. regnis* 45."

(Mary Queen of Scotia, a true Princess and legitimate heir of England and Ireland, Mother of James, King of Great Britain, who, vexed by the heresy, oppressed by the revolt of her subjects, trusting to the word of Queen Elizabeth, her own cousin, finds refuge in England in the year 1568, where she was kept prisoner for nineteen years by the perfidious Queen Elizabeth and with many calumnies sentenced by the English Senate, provoked by Heresy, she is put to death the 18th of February 1587 by the hand of a coward executioner, at the age of 45 years of her life and kingdom.)

The third inscription at the feet of Mary, reads:

"Sic funestum ascendit tabulatum Regina quondam Galliarum et Scotiae florentissimae, invicto sed pio animo tirannidem exprobat et perfidiam. Fidem catholicam profitetur Romanae Ecclesiae semper fuisse et esse filiam plane palamq. testatur."

(Thus ascended upon the funeral scaffold the one who was the Queen of France and of florid Scotland; and with an unconquered but pious mind, she reproached the tyranny of the perfidious queen, confessed her catholic faith and protested openly that she had always been a devout daughter of the Roman Church.)

Returning to the execution of my rôle, I must especially remark, that my change from the third to the fifth act should be very noticeable to the spectators. Nothing royal appears in my bearing but dignity. Every trace of what had tormented the queen and tortured the existence of the victim has disappeared from my person; I make a manifestation of all gentle sentiments and communicate all my wishes with the sweetness of a martyr resigned to her martyrdom. Therefore, when I present myself to my servants at the threshold of my room, I should inspire nothing but admiration and reverence, as if I were a holy vision.

At the sight of my weeping servants, I kindly reprove their importunate grief, telling them they should rejoice instead of grieve that I have reached the end of outrages and sufferings.

A slight smile crosses my lips when saying that I wish to meet death as I would a sweet friend, as a healing balm for all my pains. Noticing among those present my faithful Lord Melville, I regard his return to me as a heavenly grace, knowing at least one faithful tongue would tell the world how I had ended my life.

I was in the disposition to allow nothing but sweetness and affection to transpire, but feeling my courage weakening, and wishing to put a stop to that heartrending scene, with a resolute mien I say:

> "Come all and now receive my last farewell."
> Act v, Scene vii.

They all rushed to my feet.

Beholding those grieving faces and those extended arms, I cannot restrain my emotion and I exclaim:

> " . . . . . I have been much hated
> And yet much beloved. . . . . "

At last I tear myself away from that touching group of people and with a sad and prolonged "Farewell," I separate myself from those faithful friends.

From that moment I no longer belong to earth—all my sentiments, all the passions of the world have no longer

any power over my mind. I only deplore that I have been denied the comfort of a minister of my own religion:

"I see eternity's abyss before me;
And have not yet appeased the Holy One.
A priest of my religion is denied me.
And I disdain to take the sacrament,
The holy, heav'nly nourishment, from priest
Of a false faith . . . . . ."

In a transport of ineffable joy, I discover in a corner of the hall Lord Melville, as if sent to me by Heaven, in order to absolve me of all my sins and give me his blessing. Looking around attentively to see if anyone would be liable to come and surprise me, I take the crucifix that I had placed in my belt, and with an expression of greatest compunction, I kneel down before Melville, beginning my confession in a feeble voice. With an intonation, in which all the truth was revealed, I accuse myself of having borne strong hatred, of having conceived thoughts of revenge, and of not being able to forgive the one who had so bitterly wronged me. Where I lack courage and energy is when Melville, after having inquired of me if other faults are lying on my heart, I answer:

"I humbly acknowledge to have err'd,
Most grievously, I tremble to approach
Sullied with sin, the God of purity."

This part of the confession, which the author puts in the mouth of the unhappy queen, could not be expressed by me in a tone of conviction, as it is my full belief that the accusations hurled against Mary Stuart were false, and invented solely by her numerous and powerful enemies.

Mary protested her innocence on the scaffold, and she could not lie on the point of appearing before the Supreme Judge. The fact that her enemies never granted her the opportunity of justifying herself publicly, and of pointing out to the Parliament that had to judge her, the truth of her assertions is, according to my modest opinion, an evident proof that the different authors who have scorned to consider her guilty are right.

During the confession, after having heard from Mary that she has no other sin to confess, Melville assumes a

severe aspect, accuses her of lying, of trying to conceal her most incriminating fault, that for which she has been condemned—that of having taken part in the conspiracy of Paris and Babington to kill Elizabeth. With a serene expression and the calmness born of a tranquil conscience, after a short pause, I say:

"I am prepar'd to meet eternity;
Within the narrow limits of an hour,
I shall appear before the judge's throne;
But, I repeat it, my confession's ended."

But as Lord Melville insists that Mary should not delude him with a subtle artifice, I again protest my innocence, without denying, however, that I had endeavoured to enlist the sympathy of all the princes that they might free me from the unmerited captivity to which my accusers had condemned me:

"Thou mount'st, then, satisfied,
Of thy innocence, the fatal scaffold?"

Melville says, and I answer:

"God suffers me in mercy to atone
By undeserved death, my youth's transgressions."

making allusion to the death of Darnley.

Through the tears which fill my eyes, I know how to express so well the light of truthfulness, and have so much faith in heavenly justice as to cause the emotion of Melville to appear sublime. He absolves me with Christian words, and ends his invocation to God by placing his hand upon my head as a blessing. I am then kneeling down holding in my hand the crucifix, with my head raised and a smile of fervent faith upon my lips. I speak as if the beatitudes of heaven were already open before me.

After remaining for a few moments in that religious ecstasy, Hannah steps forward and, approaching Lord Melville, whispers something in his ear. After emitting a deep sigh, he raises me up, while my eyes never waver from that luminous point which my exalted imagination seems to show me:

"A painful conflict is in store for thee."

Lord Melville says sadly to me:

"Feel'st thou within thee strength enough to smother
Each impulse of malignity and hate?"

In a soft and harmonious voice I answer:

"I fear no relapse, I have to God
Devoted both my hatred, and my love."

On hearing the announcement of the coming of Burleigh, and of the Earl of Leicester, who at one time was supposed to be my suitor, I act in such a way as not to alter the expression of my face, and only come back to my earthly misery when Cecil says to me:

"I came, my Lady Stuart, to receive
Your last commands and wishes."
Act v, Scene viii.

At this point, being absorbed in the thought of God, with an expression of complete calmness I thank Lord Cecil, addressing to him some request for the benefit of my servants, and prayers for the rest of my soul, and at the end I make him the bearer of my last "farewell" to Queen Elizabeth. But after Lord Burleigh has queried:

"Say, do you still adhere to your resolve
And still refuse assistance from the Dean?"

I answer with a firm voice:

"My Lord, I've made my peace with God."

I give the words "with God" a very marked accent, meant to express that the Catholic faith had been my constant guide through life.

After asking Paulet forgiveness for having been the involuntary cause of the death of his nephew, Mortimer, I am aroused by a painful cry of my maids. I turn suddenly around. The large door at the rear of the stage opens. At the sight of the executioner, the sheriff, and the guards holding lighted torches in their hands, I show human frailty can reappear in me for an instant—I stagger—my eyes close. Lord Melville anxiously holds me up, taking the cross, which has slipped through my

hands. Then I recover my consciousness and softly say:

". . . . . Yes—my hour is come—
The Sheriff comes to lead me to my faith,
And part we must,—farewell—
You, worthy Sir, and my dear faithful Hannah,
Shall attend my last moments." . . . . .

Leaning on them, with an unsteady step, I walk to the scaffold.

Lord Burleigh wished to deprive Mary of that last comfort, to prevent her from being accompanied by her faithful ones, saying that he had no orders to authorise that. To this Mary answered, that her royal sister would never permit that her body should be offended by the contact of the rough hands of the executioner. She also assures him that Hannah will not disturb the execution with her crying.

At the request directed by Paulet to Burleigh that he grant Mary's wish, he consents. From that moment my face is transformed with the most fervent religious expression and, turning my eyes to Heaven thus, I speak:

". . . . . I now
Have nothing in this world to wish for more.
My God! My Comforter! My blest Redeemer!
As once Thy arms were stretch'd upon the cross
Let them be now extended to receive me!"

Having said this, I slowly join my hands upon my breast. Lord Melville at my side, holding the crucifix in his hand, directs my trembling steps. Suddenly, on perceiving Leicester, I am overcome by a great wave of emotion. All my past appears before me. . . . I stagger and not having strength to prevent it, fall in the arms of the Earl, who has hurriedly approached me in order to hold me. Recovering my strength, little by little, in a weak voice I say:

"You keep your word, my Lord Leicester: for
You promised me your arm to lead me forth
From prison, and you lend it to me now."

Noticing how confused Lord Leicester is at my words,

which are pronounced with a sweet voice, filled with both resignation and a slight tone of reproach, I continue:

"Farewell, my lord, and if you can, be happy!
To woo two Queens has been your daring aim;
You have disdained a tender, loving heart,
To win a proud one! . . . . . ."

I had prearranged that the Earl should show himself very much affected by those words, that he should turn to me with a beseeching gesture, as if to exculpate himself, in order to give a stronger meaning to the following words, which I then pronounce with an almost prophetic expression:

"Kneel at the feet of Queen Elizabeth!
May your reward not prove your punishment!"

At this point one could hear the slow strokes of the bell, followed by the beating of drums. Being thus recalled to earthly power, Lord Melville, filled with Christian sentiment and with an appearance of reproach, pushes me slowly to the front of the stage, in order to give me the opportunity of contemplating the cross before which I kneel, repenting my past emotion.

I fervently bring to my lips the crucifix of my rosary, while Lord Melville presents the cross to me, as if to signify: Think that you must appear in the presence of the One who will shortly judge you, purified as you are by the victory you have gained over earthly passions!

Being profoundly penetrated and shaken by that thought I stand up, sustained by my confessor, and with my look always fixed upon the sign of Redemption, still in front of me, I turn slowly around, and move toward the rear of the stage. Reaching the steps of the scaffold, with Lord Melville still by my side pointing the cross to me, I make my maids and servants, who were weeping kneeling down, understand with a gesture that I will pray for them in Heaven, and stretch out my hand to bless them.

Then, with a supreme motion having kissed the cross, I bid them an eternal "Farewell" and ascend the stair followed by the executioner and some other people.

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ADELAIDE RISTORI AS QUEEN ELIZABETH

CHAPTER II

ELIZABETH, QUEEN OF ENGLAND—A DRAMA BY P. GIACOMETTI

IT CANNOT be denied that the task of reproducing the historical character of Elizabeth, Queen of England, in a manner true to life, is a most difficult undertaking. To be able to combine the haughtiness, the royal dignity, the transcendent genius, the dissimulation, the hypocrisy, and the most striking absolutism, with the frivolity, the futility of a woman, vulgar at times, at others a queen, to portray all these different traits in one nature is a most arduous task, particularly for an actress from whom a critic expects, with justice, a personation in accordance with her fame.

When in the year 1854, I first thought of adding to my repertoire the title rôle of the drama "Elizabeth Queen of England," by the illustrious playwright Paolo Giacometti, I had necessarily to dedicate myself body and soul to the research of all that might enlighten me as to the character, and nature of this famous queen.

The result of all this study brought me to the conclusion that, though the virtues of Elizabeth as a sovereign, as a political character, were very great and rendered her famous through the whole world, and particularly beloved in England, still her well-known cruelties, her hypocrisy and her unrestrained indulgences of hatred, all of which has been transmitted to us by history, could not help but render her the object of greater dislike than admiration for the gentler people of our times. Therefore, the reader will easily understand with what effort I overcame my intimate sentiments in order to portray that unique type of woman, and of sovereign.

Whenever I undertook the study of a new part, a necessary and "absolute" condition for me to consider

was that not only a noteworthy difficulty and preconceived interpretation was before me, but that this should not turn out to be either revolting or repugnant to my nature and my individuality.

I was on the point of renouncing the presentation of the rôle of Elizabeth. An aversion to the part had gradually been growing within me, as I learned of the cruel deeds of this queen, especially of her animosity toward the unhappy Mary Stuart. However, our leading man, who at that time was also the Director of the Royal Dramatic Company in the service of the king, caused me to reflect on all the trouble my refusal to accept the rôle would bring upon me. During my investigation of this character study, the preparations for the performance had been going on. Everything was ready; and a formal announcement had been made public. I had no alternative but to resign my position, or to interpret the part. Still, even though the character of Elizabeth appeared odious to me, and such as to deter me from its enthusiastic interpretation, yet owing to the care I had taken, regardless of my own sentiments, to familiarise myself with it, I think I am not in error when I say that the public found this rôle among the most elaborate and complete studies of my repertoire.

At her first appearance on the scene, the carriage, the gesture, the tone of voice of Elizabeth, should be those of a person familiar with the ordering of important state affairs, whose opinion is not to be disputed, whose culture and knowledge of foreign languages give her more than common gratification, and who was equal one day to rebuking severely in the Latin language a Polish ambassador, who, having addressed her in that tongue, had revealed some indiscreet pretensions, thinking that the Queen was not well versed in the knowledge of Latin. She complained once to her favourites of having been forced to "destroy her old Latin."

I took particular care to make it plain to the spectators that, in spite of the affection which Elizabeth at that time felt for the Earl of Essex, her haughty nature would, with her sarcasm and disdain, place all on the same level, whenever she supposed that any one of her favourites

dared to raise his ambitious aspiration to the possession of her hand.

In the first act, there is the scene in which the author, Giacometti—with one of those inspirations which are familiar to him and which are very striking—creates a most difficult contrast in its action, by displaying a characteristic trait of this great queen, and thus giving the opportunity to the actress who plays the part to show her ability.

Elizabeth had to dictate two letters at the same moment, employing her Secretary, Davison, and the young philosopher, Bacon. The first letter is dictated in the irritated tone of the Sovereign, to Lord Leicester, in reply to a message he has sent her in which he notified her of the ovations of triumph he had received in Holland, and pushing his audacity to the extent of asking her for the crown of Belgium which the Counts of Egmont, of Horn and of Flessing have offered to him, in the name of the United Provinces. All this is expressed in a most egotistic manner, which vexes the queen.

The second letter contains an order that she wishes to give to Judge Popham.

Though Bacon knows how adverse Elizabeth is to the latest work of Shakespeare, "Henry VIII," because he has dared to put on the stage her father and mother and herself, yet with the hope of obtaining her consent to its production, Bacon begs her on his knees to listen to some of the passages of the play. She reluctantly grants his request.

Then with all the emphasis with which an author may read his own work in order to make it well appreciated, (and some historians go even so far as to maintain that this drama is a creation of Bacon), he declaims some parts of the play in which is prophesied the greatness, the prosperity, and the long life of Elizabeth, and which exalts her exemplary magnanimity and her fame as a maiden-queen! . . . The stratagem of Bacon proves very successful. Hearing herself so highly flattered, Elizabeth writes with her own hand at the foot of the manuscript, that it is her wish that the drama of "Henry VIII" be presented within a fortnight at Windsor, in her Court

theatre. But learning from Bacon that the play cannot be produced so soon, as Shakespeare is in prison for debts, the queen resolves to dictate at once a letter to Bacon for Judge Pophan, in which she informs him that she consents that the drama "Henry VIII" shall be produced. And as Pophan has unconsciously forbidden the production of a drama in which the queen is highly exalted she finds a way to punish him by making him pay all Shakespeare's debts, "according to the note that Bacon will present to him." She ended her letter by saying: That she hopes that in future he will put on his glasses in order to better distinguish white from black.

I dictate these two letters at the same time, giving to the one destined for the Earl of Leicester the greatest impression of severity, declaring that "crowns were not made for his head, and least of all the one of Belgium, which she herself had refused." I added that he is to resign immediately from the command of the troops under the leadership of Sir Walter Raleigh, if he does not wish me to have him placed under arrest by a regiment of cavalry. This dictation, given with movements of ire, alternates with the other to Pophan, given in a familiar but authoritative and bantering tone, such as the subject of the letter required.

Such a contrast produced completely the effects that the author desired.

During the second act there are some very remarkable scenes, in which the author has found the way to delineate and put together the various episodes of the life of Elizabeth, by connecting them in a masterly manner, taking advantage of all the license of time and place that would be tolerated on the stage, and this without either spoiling or altering the regular procedure of the action, or making the parts appear unnatural or uninteresting in their connection.

I preferred the second act to the others, because it offered me the opportunity of playing a comedy part, which I so much liked. Even later on, during my professional career, it was a source of great pleasure to me, when owing to some unexpected circumstance I was asked

to play a comic rôle in either Goldoni's "Locandiera," or "I Gelosi Fortunati."

In the above-mentioned second act of Elizabeth, there is a coquettish scene, in which the cunning, the flattering queen, pretends to accept at times the loving overtures of the Earl of Essex, and to pity at the same time the ill-repressed emotions of jealousy of the Earl of Leicester who believes that Essex is his fortunate rival; while at other moments the queen suddenly assumes the tone of the offended Sovereign, and dismisses the Earl of Essex from her presence, saying "that in her queenly heart never did enter a feeble affection," and, controlling her feelings, she allows herself to add "that one should make exception to the Duke of Anjou and the Admiral Seymour!" Then when the Earl of Essex perceives, by the anger of the queen, that he has gone a little too far, he throws himself at her feet, asking forgiveness. In playing that part, I assumed the looks of the offended queen, while clearly showing to the spectators that I enjoyed that unrestrained outburst of jealousy. And, frowning I would say: "You wicked man, you dare to love your Queen! . . ." I would act so that Essex should try to take hold of my hand to impress a kiss upon it, while, with a disdainful commanding gesture, I would draw it back. Then, little by little, without being noticed by the Earl, I admire at a glance, with a loving satisfaction, that noble and handsome knight in so submissive a pos-ture, and conquering those sentiments of love and pride which were antagonistic to my nature, I exclaim, in a jesting manner: "What are you doing there? Are you reciting your prayers? Rise . . rise up!"

In pronouncing these last two words, my hand, motioning him to rise, would with dignity slightly touch the hair of the Earl, so that the latter, feeling encouraged by that gesture, would rise, grasp my hand, and cover it with kisses, and holding it tightly with both his hands, exclaim, with emotion: "Ah! the Queen of England has taken my hand!" I, disengaging myself, would move back, and with affected modesty would end the dialogue, saying: "I did not notice it!" Restraining then my emotion and my love, and hearing the Earl sweetly utter the

words: "That it was not possible to love another woman after having seen Elizabeth!" greatly moved, with a long look—in which was expressed all the love that was dominating me at that moment—after a short hesitation, taking a gem from my finger, I offer it to the Earl, and solemnly promise to him: "That if owing to any wrong he may commit, he should lose the grace of his queen, by presenting me or having that ring presented to me, he shall be pardoned, and I pledge my word as queen!"

In a monologue which follows this scene, the author endeavours to bring out all the characteristic features of the nature of Elizabeth. While the passion of love seems to tame and finally conquer her, her unrestrained pride and fever for absolute power, which constantly devour her, smother in her heart all the tender and gentle womanly feelings, and make her feel ashamed of her spasmodic weakness. The idea of having to yield to the insistent wish of the Parliament, of the Puritans, and of Wentworth, that she choose a husband: "the fear of having to share her kingdom with another, and not be any longer the arbiter of everything and of all," strengthens more than ever her resolution to remain free and her own mistress.

While she is in a gracious frame of mind, her Secretary, Davison, presents himself, bearing a letter from Mary Stuart addressed to her, and also the death sentence for Mary, in order that the Queen may place on it the royal seal.

Elizabeth can hardly repress an expression of joy, and covers her emotion with a mask of hypocrisy. She reads the letter of the unhappy prisoner, with ill-concealed impatience. At the end of it, Mary Stuart declares as her heir and successor to the throne of Scotland, (thinking that her son James is allied with her murderers) the unconquerable Philip II, King of Spain. Elizabeth is then assailed by one of her usual excesses of hatred and says to herself, in a sneering way: "that she herself will assume the execution of the will, but that in the meanwhile she will send her to meet the angels!" A most horrible sentiment worthy of a perverse woman.

During the scene of dissimulation with James VI, who

comes to ask for the life of his mother, threatening to avenge her death, in case his prayer is not granted—with a set expression in my face, and a harassed, penetrating look, I show to the audience the storm that is brewing within me.

But on the arrival of Davison, who comes to announce in a loud voice: "that the executioner has shown to the people the head of Mary Stuart," my appearance undergoes a complete transformation, and a cry of unrepressed joy escapes me, which, however, owing to the consternation of the bystanders at the terrible announcement, passes unobserved. I quickly repress it, breaking forth furiously against those who had executed the sentence. With my usual quickness, I instantaneously impress upon my face a very exaggerated expression of grief, of repressed hysterics, succeeding thus in deceiving even James VI, who is not able to discern "whether my grief was real or pretended." Having remained alone with my courtiers, I keep up before them also, my hypocrisy, weeping and declaring that I have decided to spend the rest of my days in a cloister, in penance and contemplation. But the unexpected return of the adventurer, Francis Drake, who had been sent by Elizabeth through the Spanish regions in order to discover the movements of the Spaniards, causes my face and my whole body to undergo an instantaneous and complete change. The death of Mary Stuart, my hypocritical pretences, the false penitence, all were forgotten in the feverish anxiety to learn the result of the mission intrusted to Drake.

He relates that the war preparations of the enemy are vast enough to conquer all Europe; that the fleet, divided in two squadrons cover the sea for the space of seven miles from one extremity to the other; that some of the bravest foreign captains are allied to the Spaniards, who, feeling already certain of victory, are calling their fleet the "invincible armada." Hearing all this, I dart flames from my eyes, and in an outburst I cry: "At last, I have succeeded in my purpose!" Then, like a fiery steed who prances at the roar of cannons, Elizabeth, electrified by the presentiment of a great victory, shows

that she feels her blood boil in her veins, and that her imagination is exalted.

When Don Mendoza, the Ambassador of Spain, in an arrogant tone declares war against her in the name of his King, Philip II, Elizabeth thanks him disdainfully. Then, as an experienced leader of armies, with a feverish ardour I give the orders for the war preparations, dividing the commands, establishing the various authorities, and enthused by my belligerent spirit, I assure my Lords "that a most powerful sword will fight for England." "And which one?" asks Mendoza. "The one of Henry VIII," I answer, filled with pride. "Who will have the courage to wield it?" adds, with petulance, Mendoza. "I!" I reply, throwing myself toward the trophy formed with the arms of Henry VIII. And grasping, with a threatening movement, the formidable sword which was to assure the victory of England, with a threatening voice I add: "And tell to Philip that Elizabeth has unsheathed it. When two nations meet like two athletic giants on the ocean, the world will tremble, and after their encounter, one of these two will disappear in a bloody pool, like a pebble thrown by a child in the water! O England, O Spain, O Elizabeth, O Philip! Upon the memory of the King, my father, I swear it!" And I remain with my sword raised, placing my hand on it in the act of an oath. All the bystanders drawing their swords, point them in the direction of mine, repeating: "We swear."

With this tableau the curtain drops.

The third act does not contain any scenes adding to this remarkable interpretation of Elizabeth's character, with the exception of two interesting situations; the historical episode of Marguerite Lambrun and the punishment of Essex.

When Marguerite is led before me, in consequence of her attempt upon my life, I question her with an angry voice, having decided to punish her with death, but on hearing the resolute tone in which she declares, without changing her countenance, that her purpose was to kill me in order to avenge the death of her unfortunate

mistress, Mary Stuart, as well as that of her poor husband, who had died of grief, not having been able to survive the horrible fate of his queen, I become much affected. I ask what I should do to her after such a confession; and hearing her bold answer that I should forgive her, filled with astonishment I add: "And what assurance have I that you will not again attempt my life?" To which Marguerite answers: "That a pardon granted with so many restrictions is no longer a pardon, and that I may have her head!" Such presumption, such temerity, such courage of expression, the queen had never before seen in anyone during all her reign; they subjugated her—and after a moment of hesitation, yielding to an impulse of generosity, hastily, for fear of repenting, she says to Marguerite: "Go with God, but be quick! . . . "

As regards the colouring that I thought best to give to this scene, it seemed to me well to interpret the intention of the author, by expressing in a marked way, with face and voice—the contrasts between generosity, severity, and greatness, the characteristic instincts of this great queen.

The other important situation begins with the reception granted by Elizabeth to the conquerors of Cadiz. The expression of my face had to reveal my purpose of avenging myself on the Earl of Essex for the love that he bore the Lady Sarah, for having overstepped the power intrusted to him, and for not having conformed to my wishes.

I begin the speech addressed to the victors, praising and thanking them both in my name and in the name of all England, for the most important victory they had gained over the formidable Spanish fleet. I name Drake high admiral, Lord Howard, Earl of Nottingham. As to Essex, who, like the others, has respectfully knelt at my feet, expecting that he, also, would be rewarded for his prowess, I commence by admiring the courage he has shown during the battle, and this in an insinuating, tranquil voice, as if I am preparing him to receive an adequate recompense. "However," I add, "taking into consideration that you have failed in your duties as a subject, denying obedience to those whom I had invested

with supreme power over the armies of land and sea, becoming also a rebel to the orders of your queen; I will wait to reward you until I obtain from you proofs of obedience and submission."

All this is said with an austere face, in a firm and vibrating voice, as if I wished that each one of my words should hurt his heart, and humiliate him before all. The Earl, recovering from his amazement, begins to give vent to his rancour for the injustice he suffers and ends by reproving me for having overwhelmed with honours and distinctions Lord Howard, whom, he knew, had only won the battle owing to a raging storm which had run the Spanish ships upon the rocks. I ask him in vain to be silent. Little by little my anger grows, particularly when I hear the Earl boast of being descended from a line of kings, and when I, endeavouring to prevent Lord Howard from accepting the challenge that the Earl has thrown at him, and the latter, with a sardonic smile, says: "Can the dukes and the earls no longer fight one another without the permission of the Queen? . . ." Then my ire overflows, and renders me so blind as to cause me to throw my glove in his face! Lord Essex, losing all control and exasperated by this insult, oversteps every consideration of regard and respect for his queen and breaks forth into fierce invectives against her. He accuses her "of having fused her crown with those of dukes and earls; of having made the Parliament of England like the Divan of Mahomet; of having reprieved all privileges"; and as if this were not enough, he fills the measure of his insults by calling her "an Occidental Vestal who more than once has allowed her sacred flame to go out, upon the tripod of Jupiter."

All the dramatic business and the accentuation of the words I had to utter during the various climaxes at the end of this act, were so well indicated by the author that the portraying the situation did not entail much difficulty. I took good care never to forget that I was a queen, even when a prey to the most violent excitement, and that this queen was Elizabeth of England! . .

Several years elapse between the third and fourth

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ADELAIDE RISTORI IN 1880

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acts, during which the Earl of Essex, having obtained forgiveness for the fault he had committed, has again become a favourite of Elizabeth. He is now sent as a general to Ireland, invested with full powers to repress energetically the revolts and troubles which are constantly arising there. Owing to the inability of the new general this undertaking had most unfortunate results. His haughtiness and imprudence led him to the point of raising the flag of revolt against his own queen. He was arrested and sentenced to die on the scaffold. It is at this point that the action of the fourth act begins. Elizabeth's body is now beginning to bend under the weight of her years! Grief at seeing herself forced to use any severity against the man who has been so dear to her, the only one she really has loved, contributes much toward the abatement of her power of mind, I had studied how to show the effects of my progressing old age. (Elizabeth was then sixty-five years old.)

Seeing that Lady Burleigh observes my agitation, I try to conceal from her its true cause, endeavouring to persuade her that whenever I have to sentence anyone to death I experience dreadful and cruel pains. Still, in spite of myself, I allow myself almost unconsciously to say that the real reason of my embarrassment is the fear that Lord Essex will delay sending me the ring that I had given to him in a moment of tenderness, with the solemn promise of forgiving him any wrongdoings whenever he should have it presented to me. Lady Burleigh is convinced that the Earl has not yet dared to send the ring. He knows how guilty he is and fears to irritate the Queen even more—and she offers her services to betake herself to the Tower, not as an envoy of the Queen, but as if following her own inspiration, in order to advise the Earl of the clemency and the magnanimity of his queen. Then, without being observed by Lady Burleigh, I express joy at such a proposition; but fearing to fall short of my dignity, with an evident effort, I prevent her from carrying out her plan: "Stop"—I would say to her—"if he is as proud as Lucifer, let him go and meet him." On the arrival of Lord Burleigh, who comes to submit the sentence of death for the royal signature,

Elizabeth cannot repress entirely the painful emotion which dominates her in spite of herself. She orders all to leave and in the meantime tells Lord Burleigh to send her Davison, the Lord of the Seal.

Having remained alone and being thus able to give vent to my own feelings, I emit long sighs at first, while unfolding upon the table the long parchment and look at it with a sad and painful expression, as if it seems impossible that I should affix my name to it, and send to death the only man I had ever loved! Very much perplexed, but even more resolute, the spectators should perceive that struggle within myself. At moments, in order to acquire strength and not to give in to a womanly weakness, the necessity of this death penalty seeming to me imperative, I exclaim: "He must die—as the other conspirators — Suffolk — Pary — Babington — Lopez and Mary Stuart have died! . . " With every one of these interjections, I make the gesture of dipping my pen in the ink and signing the fatal parchment; but I soon lose the courage to accomplish such an act. In order to urge myself to do it, I say to myself: "But if I should forgive him, it would be as if I were to confess my weakness! . . I to be weak? . . Never! . . . " and again I resolve to sign the parchment; and again my courage abandons me, and, with a gesture of wrath, I throw the pen on the floor. A flash of hope would suddenly dart through me. "Perhaps the pride of the Earl may fail him before the thought of death . . . perhaps Essex has already given the ring to somebody who might bring it to me." And encouraged by such an illusion, I vehemently ring the bell and ask if any message has come for me from the Tower. Receiving an answer in the negative, and feeling exhausted, I sit heavily down in my armchair, exclaiming: "Pride! pride! to die with his life in his hands. . . "

The author of the drama introduces at this point the historical episode of the ring, to show its importance in connection with the death of the Earl of Essex, and how much it contributed to hasten the death of Elizabeth. Lally Tollendal says: "He lost his head upon the scaffold and the grief that the Queen experienced in seeing herself

forced to such a rigorous act against a man who had been so dear to her, plunged her into a profound melancholia." Two years later, when the Countess of Nottingham confessed, on her death-bed, the perfidy her husband had forced her to commit by preventing her from returning to the Queen the fatal ring, as a token of the repentance of Essex and as a means of obtaining the clemency of his queen, Elizabeth was no longer able to restrain her deep emotion. "The Lord may forgive you," she said to the dying Countess, "but I shall never be able to do it!" From that moment the fatal blow began to take effect. She hardly consented in taking any more food and refused all the remedies given to her, saying that she only desired death!

Returning to the description of the last mentioned scene, I then suggest with bitterness: "that Lady Burleigh has not understood me." I deplore that I am forced, for the first time in the many years of my reign, to express a wish without being obeyed. In order to suppress any sense of repentance, I picture to myself Essex as a rebel deserving all my severity. Then the fear of committing an injustice causes me to tremble! . . Remorse torments me, and becoming a prey to it my imagination causes me to see the ghost of Mary Stuart, that for a long time after her horrible end disturbed my sleep. . . causing me to rise from my bed terrified! . . Then, recovering my senses, I blush at my weakness, and overcome with self-contempt and discomfiture—imagining I see the so-much-desired ring brought to me—with all the energy of my being and of my offended love, forgetting all but State reasons, and the dignity of the Crown, I sanction the decision of the Judges, and quickly sign the sentence. My heart is then broken! Davison, who has been sent to me by Lord Burleigh, presents himself to take away the sentence. At the sight of him I tremble painfully, and strive to conceal the alteration of my face. Forced as I am to submit to the sacrifice imposed on me by a sense of duty, I slowly hand over the parchment with a trembling hand to the Master of the Seal. . . But, as if by holding it back in my hand I could prolong

for a few minutes the life of Essex, I act in such a way to make Davison humbly try to take it from my hand, which clenched it convulsively.

As soon as Davison gets the document, he approaches the door; but owing to a new sentiment of passion, I hastily call him back. Davison turns around, thinking he is to receive some new orders; but quickly moved by a sense of my dignity, I tell him to hasten and have the sentence executed. When Davison has left, I give free vent to my despair, accusing Essex of having dragged me to that step.

The appearance of Lady Nottingham, who comes hurriedly to ask pardon for the Earl, again increases my wrath and I see in her only a rival. But on hearing that Howard has taken away from her the ring that Essex had intrusted her to give to me I at first pretend to doubt her assertion. However, after the oath, upon the soul of her mother, that Lady Sarah utters, every suspicion vanishes. In a paroxysm of alarm I order my page to mount my faithful steed, Juar, to kill him in the run, if necessary, provided he overtakes Davison on the way to the Tower and requests that the sentence should be torn to pieces, promising the coronet of an Earl to any one among my vassals who succeeds in overtaking Davison. A few instants later, Lord Burleigh, followed by Bacon, comes in, and magisterially announces the execution of Essex! Hearing the news I remain as if petrified, then falling upon my chair in a subdued voice I whisper: "He is dead! He is dead!" I then slowly rise, and with my eyes veined with blood, trembling through all my limbs, I exclaim: "Before the sun shall set, the fatal bronze will roar again" (making allusion to the death of Nottingham that I was about to order), and turning furiously around the stage, I cry: "I must have in my hands the head of the Earl of Nottingham!" Then with an outburst of despairing grief, I continued: "Ah! my Robert is no more! . . . the only man that I have truly loved! And it is I who have killed him! . . . no one has dared ask his pardon! . . . they all hated him! and yet not one of them was worthy to kiss the dust raised by his horse on a day of battle! . . . "

Noticing that Bacon has remained at one side I rush furiously upon him, obliging him to advance, and filled with venom, I say to him: "And you, miserable coward, you were nothing, and you owe only to Robert if you have ever become anybody; it is to him you owe the honours I have bestowed on you. . . . He generously redeemed you from shame and paid your debts. He trusted you and you have not defended him. . . . It was your sacred duty to plead for his life to me; you should have shown me Ireland prostrated . . . Cadiz in flames . . . you should have broken his cuirass . . . counted one after the other his wounds . . . offered them to me as a pledge for his life. . . . But instead you preferred to guide the hand of the judges when they decreed the fatal sentence, and to direct mine, when I confirmed it. . . . Be cursed! Be cursed like Cain! . . . "

All those present advance toward me in the endeavour to placate my anger while I imperiously command: "Go all of you! . . . I want it! . . . "

Left alone, crushed with anguish, shaken by so many terrible emotions, I do not dare to raise my eyes to heaven, fearing its wrath, and I fall prostrate on my face, pronouncing these words: "Here . . . alone . . . in a pool of blood! Alone with my remorse . . . and with God! . . . "

The curtain drops.

In the fifth act Elizabeth is nearing her end. According to the history, though undermined by a consuming illness, still her iron temperament shows prodigiously at times. The fire which coursed through her veins in past years was not yet extinguished, some sparks of it still lived.

Making my appearance on the stage, my looks show the change that advanced age has made in my face, and also the impression of the illness which is consuming me. My words make conspicuous the artifice I use in deluding my courtiers regarding the rapid progress of my illness. I enter the stage, on my return from the House of Commons, leaning on the arm of Burleigh, covered with my royal cape, the crown on my head. My appearance

is that of a person still labouring under nervous agitation; caused by a lively discussion, which has taken place in the Parliament. Narrating what has happened I would make a pretence of gaiety which surprises those who surround me. The careless arrangement of my hair, the wrinkles of my face, the slow movements of my arms, reveal to the audience, that, more than my old age, there is a grief undermining my existence. I answer Burleigh, who advises me to sit down: "that motion is life, that on account of having been seated too long on my sedan chair, I feel as if I were suffocating."

On my returning to the palace, I have been vividly impressed by noticing how few people had gathered to see me pass. But I did not wish my old Minister to know that I felt this. Looking at Burleigh with a scrutinising glance, in a tone of pretended indifference, I address him thus: "Tell me, have you asked my good English people that they should not crowd too much on my passage . . . and . . . that they should not applaud me?" At the negative answer of Burleigh, without being observed by him, I frown and sigh. Then having recourse to an artifice, with an indifferent air, I say that my question is prompted by the knowledge that he considered me ill and consequently might have thought that the sight of a crowding throng came to greet me on my passage might disturb me. Then, for the purpose of assuring him that I am perfectly cured, I begin gaily to give an account of the victory gained by the House of Commons in its defence of the royal property. Having said this with an almost childish satisfaction, I add: "Ah!" . . . as if I were convinced of having spoken admirably, while Burleigh with a flattering zeal, like a typical courtier would approve. Then, turning to Bacon, I tell him to inform Shakespeare that it is my wish that they again perform "Henry VIII," because I enjoy seeing myself as a babe in the arms of my godmother! I give the dispositions for the preparations of a feast. Then, sitting down, I ask what news are current in the city, and on hearing that the capture of the Earl of Tyrone is imminent, turn to Burleigh, and say to him jocosely: "It seems to me I have well chased away the flies from

the crown of England!" Grasping the opportunity, Burleigh adds: "that his successor would certainly receive her splendidly and respect her." On hearing these words, I rise, and casting a penetrating look upon him, scrutinising him suspiciously, as I already have the knowledge of his secret correspondence with James VI. Burleigh who has guessed this suspicion makes an apology for his words, pleading the fear that he feels "to die before seeing assured the succession to the Crown." I pretend to lend faith to his words, by apparently approving them. But wishing to return to that ridiculous farce, I ask him: "Upon whom, according to your advice, should the 'wise' choice fall?" "And upon who else but the young King of Scotland?" he replies. Then, bursting with hatred, which I had with difficulty restrained to that moment, I cry out at him, grasping his arm: "There, I recognise you, traitor!" "Burleigh a traitor?" "Yes, because you keep up a secret correspondence with James." "No, but he alone, perhaps, would be able to prevent a civil war in England." "Such is also my feeble opinion," adds Davison.

Thrown into a paroxysm of anger I repeat: "Civil war! always a civil war! . . . With this ghost you caused me to sentence to death Suffolk, Mary, Babington, Robert of Essex! . . . " Pronouncing this name, the cords of my heart are shaken, my hard breathing chokes me, my eyes pour forth tears; and not being able to hold them back, I repeat, between my sobs, the name of Robert! They all crowd around me, but an impulse of ire getting the upper hand of my grief, I order them to leave, their persistence in consoling me only increases my anger. Broken down with grief and physical pains, it is with difficulty I succeed in calming myself. After a long pause, having assured myself that they all have left me and that I am no longer forced to dissimulate, my body and my mind show themselves as they really are. The remembrance of the death of Essex, which I had myself ordered, tears my heart; remorse gnaws me, prostrates me, I feel the need of throwing myself on a bed. I drag myself with difficulty, my body bent, reclining my head and placing my

hands on my forehead, I touch the crown which covers it.

"Ah! this is also a great weight!" I say sighing, "and still I have worn it for forty-four years and it seemed so light to me!" After a short pause, I ask myself: "And who will wear you after me? . . . " But soon in an altered voice, pushing the crown away from me, I grumble, "I don't wish to know."

I review sadly my glorious past, and deplore that no longer I hear it said: "that I ride like Alexander, that I walk like a Venus, that I sing and play like Orpheus!" I no longer hear the people applaud me when I pass. I bewail that my chair should pass through the streets like a bier! Then, I ask myself if it is because I have become old! Still the years have not left their impression upon me—I would repeat—there is not a silver thread among my beautiful golden hair! . . . and I pass my hand through my hair with the flattering vanity of a young girl. Then, with an expressive gesture, let the audience understand that in order to ascertain for myself how my looks are I want to consult a looking-glass; but as soon as I see myself in it I draw back with disgust, noticing the deep wrinkles all over my face, the languor of my eyes, my livid and sunken cheeks. My breathing becomes difficult, my eyes troubled, and my mind distracted. I am frightened, and I cry repeatedly: "Help! help!" But with a sudden return of pride, I smother my cries, pressing my mouth with a handkerchief. I imagine myself enshrouded in darkness, I see the white shadows of bleeding ghosts coming toward me. In order to escape from them and not be grasped by one of them I huddle up in my bed; but the heads which have been cut off from the bodies, seem to roll down at my feet, they terrify me, and becoming the prey of horrible spasms I again fall on my bed, asking with joined hands and suffocating voice, for mercy! After a long pause I somewhat recover myself. Without opening my eyes and with a half-choked voice, I ask for Burleigh, that he come to help me. But James VI, who is hiding in my boudoir, runs at my cries, and helps me to rise before I recognise him. When on my feet again, having perceived James, I feel terrified, and with

loud cries I call for my guards and my ladies in waiting to defend me. They all come running and surround me. Then, with interrupted ejaculations, owing to my fright, and with trembling gestures, I indicate James to Burleigh, who reassures me saying: "That he was no one else but the King of Scotland who had come to London to inquire for my health," and I ask: "But why does he carry in his hands the head of his mother? . . . what does he want to do with it? . . . does he want to throw it at my face? . . . " Hearing such words, James advances toward me. I, being terrified, utter a cry, and run into the arms of my people, covering my face with both my hands, as if to escape contact with the head of Mary Stuart. After the assurances of all my courtiers and of James himself, I quiet down and covering my eyes with my right hand, with a childish fearing hesitancy, I look through my fingers to see if James has not lied to me, and being assured of the truth of what he said, I take courage gradually and breathe easier, a light smile comes to my lips, I repeat to all that it has been nothing but a nightmare, and would end by saying: "I am better! I am better!" At that moment Drake returns from his mission, bringing news of the arrest of Tyrone. Though weakened by the suffering she has passed through, at that announcement Elizabeth utters a cry of joy on hearing that the one who has made her tremble on the throne has been humiliated, and gives orders that he be immediately beheaded. Drake makes her understand that he would never have the terrible Irishman in his hands if he had not surrendered himself, trusting in the magnanimity of the great queen. Penetrated by such words, and experiencing a return of generous sentiments, I remain for an instant meditative and perplexed. With a significant look, I consult Burleigh, who answers with signs that he should be pardoned. Then I say with dignity to Drake: "He who has considered me great, shall not find me less than my fame. . . . I forgive him!"

But the last moments of Elizabeth are approaching, already her strength is leaving her. Burleigh and the maids take her staggering to her bed and place her on it. Feeling herself dying, Elizabeth consents to select a

successor. I look at James in such a way as to convey that my choice should fall upon him; I cause him to kneel before me; Lady Burleigh hands me the crown, and at the moment I am about to crown him, I say to him with difficulty: "Kneel down. . . . I crown you as king! . . . " These words came out of my lips, as if they were torn out of my heart. The people who were notified from the balcony by a signal from Davison that the great deed was done, begin to cry: "Long live James I, King of England."

On hearing those cries I become infuriated. I call my people ungrateful. I tear the crown from the head of James, place it on my own with both my hands and cry: "Ungrateful people! I am still alive! . . . "

But my strength totally abandons me, I lie down on the bed, and with my dying voice I recommend to James "the Bible and the sword of my father."

The delirium and the agony of death are taking hold of me. The remembrance of Essex comes to me; it seems as if I saw him I would reach my arms to him as though to draw him to me and give him a forgiving kiss, and after a short struggle with death, I finally succumb, remaining there with glassy eyes, surrounded by my courtiers, who, while weeping, repeat: "She is dead!"

This is the manner in which I thought to interpret this great drama of Paolo Giacometti. I studied, as I said, within the limits of history that strange character of woman and queen. I developed the last scenes, which may be called the climax of the drama, with firmness, with persuasion, with all the shading from vigour to senility. Those lines which are the prelude of a most bitter farewell to a long past of power, I studied to interpret in a way to make one understand the fascination she exercised upon her people during her reign, and the remorse which grew constantly greater with the approach of death.

CHAPTER III

LADY MACBETH—A DRAMA BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THE study of this character was for me the source of great difficulties, seeing before me not the ordinary person, filled with perverted passions and frivolous excesses, but a colossal conception of perfidy, of dissimulation, of hypocrisy, which is treated with a masterly grandeur by Shakespeare with so many hyperbolical manifestations as to frighten any dramatic genius.

Some of the critics, going back to the origin of the legend from which Shakespeare gained his inspiration, form the opinion that love for her husband was predominant in Lady Macbeth, and so strong as to induce her to become guilty of many crimes for the sake of seeing him reign.

With me, the close investigation of this character, produced the conviction that with Lady Macbeth affection for her husband was the last factor actuating her deeds—that she was animated only by her excessive ambition to reign with him, and that, knowing his inferiority of mind, his weak nature, which was not able even to move the greed for possession which burned in his veins and in his brain to action—she used her affection for him as a means to satisfy her ambition. Being conscious of the fascination that she exercised over him, she took advantage of it for the purpose of instilling into his mind the virus of crime putting it in the most natural light and with the most insinuating and persuasive reasonings.

By this I do not mean to say that Macbeth did not possess a nature inclined to do evil. Shakespeare shows us the germ of ambition that was gnawing him, and the kind of chimerical illusions that ran through his mind. He only concealed them from others because it seemed to him impossible to make them realities. I could not better succeed in depicting the nature of this man, than

Shakespeare so marvellously does in the lines of the first monologue of Lady Macbeth who, owing to her profound perspicacity, so well understands her husband. This appreciation of mine will appear even more evident in the analysis I make further on of that passage. Perhaps one might admit a similar monstrous tenderness in Lady Macbeth if she had not shared together with her husband the power and the royal greatness; but as they derived from their crime all its advantages, I maintain that it was not solely owing to her ambition and love for her husband that she became its instigator, but also for the sake of obtaining the supreme honours and powers which she so much longed for. Any mother, any woman who pretends to know how great is the love for a son who has been nursed with her own milk, and is able to declare to her husband, without tremour, that if she had sworn to crush the skull of her own child she would not have hesitated a moment (and this to make Macbeth feel ashamed of his pusillanimity in flinching before the only means suitable to his guilty purpose), is not a woman, not a human being, but a creature worse than a wild beast, and as such, it cannot be admitted that there existed in her any sweet affection. Nevertheless, not wishing to proclaim my conception as an infallible one, I made new studies and new investigations of the various judgments of this tragedy and the interpretations that some of the most renowned actors had adopted.

Great was my satisfaction on reading in the magazine *The Nineteenth Century*, of February, 1878, the magnificent study made by Mr. G. J. Bell, Professor of Laws, in the Edinburgh University, of the interpretation which the renowned English actress, Mrs. Siddons, gave to the part of Lady Macbeth. Among the various passages this one is, according to my opinion, most important: "Her troublesome and inhuman nature does everything. She draws Macbeth to gratify her purpose, she uses him as a simple instrument, becoming herself his guide, his leader, insinuating to him all the plot. As the wicked genius of Macbeth, she rushes him along the crazy path of ambition and cruelty, from which he would have liked to withdraw."

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ADELAIDE RISTORI AS LADY MACBETH
Act III. Scene 4 (The Banquet Scene)

Hoping that I have plainly shown, with substantial arguments, that my interpretation of the character of Lady Macbeth, was as Shakespeare had intended and indicated it to be by his own words and the nature of the action, I shall proceed with the analysis of other important points of this difficult part.

Various are the opinions referring to the interpretation of the reading of the message, which Macbeth sends from the field of battle to his wife, and which Shakespeare makes her hold in her hands at her first appearance upon the stage. There are some who maintain that a message coming to her from her husband at such a moment should fill her with so great a desire to know its contents that it would not appear unnatural for her to wait until she comes before the audience to read it, and hence she should have taken knowledge of it before.

I will say instead, that it was not very natural either that Shakespeare, that great poet, that great philosopher and reader of human nature, should have employed the frivolous expedient of having Lady Macbeth read the letter on the stage with the sole object of making the audience acquainted with its contents, exposing himself to such an obvious criticism. Only an inexperienced and insignificant writer, dull of mind and imagination, would have had recourse to such an expedient, not the great poet of the fervid imagination, who passes from the beautiful to the sublime with the greatest facility.

It must certainly have been purposely devised by the author in order that it should appear that Lady Macbeth has received the message a little before the moment she comes on the stage and her manner is both easy and natural. When she begins to look anxious and agitated, she makes the spectators understand that owing to his message—whose contents she partly knows—some great events are revealed which will change all her existence, and carry her to a supreme height, and all the circumstances of the play indicate the culmination of the projects which are brewing in her mind. Another proof that Lady Macbeth is presenting herself before the

audience, has already commenced the reading of the message, is shown by the first verse which she reads:

"They met me in the day of success."

Can this be the beginning of an important message? Macbeth must already have given her the account of the battle, of the victory and of the existence of the witch sisters.

I resolved to read that missive straight down as if I had already read the first words of it while I was entering the stage, only stopping at the places where the strange knowledge of what has happened is in accord with what the regulating destiny of all the events had long before led her to foresee.

For instance my expression would portray a superstitious wonder on reading that the fatal sisters "made themselves air, into which they vanished," after the prophecy they had cast at him, addressing him: "Hail, king that shalt be!"

Having ended the reading I make a long pause, as if analysing the fatal content of that missive, which was in accordance with what I had anticipated. Then, for a moment I remain sadly steeped in thought, gloomy, considering and fearing on account of the weak nature of my husband; then reflecting on the most striking passages of the missive, I say:

"Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised."

And to that "shalt be" I would give a supernatural force of expression.

Later on, I was happy to read in the interesting essay of Prof. Bell that Mrs. Siddons, also, with a prophetic and exalted tone, as if all the mysteries of the future were present to her soul, in the lines: "Glamis thou art and Cawdor, and shalt be what thou art promised," accentuated emphatically "shalt be."

This is another convincing proof that Mrs. Siddons also understood the importance of analysing the missive, of weighing every sentence, in order to transmit to the public the mystic meaning. With her eager ambition,

the expression would naturally have been different if Lady Macbeth had had the whole knowledge of the missive.

I found it natural to read the following verses which are a part of the monologue I have mentioned above, and which depict in its most vivid colours the nature of Macbeth's character, as if I were uttering them before himself, penetrating with my eye the depths of his soul, as if I wanted to impress the words there in fiery characters:

"..... Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it';
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
That wishest should be undone."

For the sake of showing later that my preoccupation had vanished and that I was ardently longing for the return of my husband in order to commence the web of my malignant artifices, I would say:

"..... Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal."

I would then turn myself toward that side from which Macbeth had to come back, in order to express that—after due reflection—I had commenced to form in my mind the plan that the reading of the message would naturally have suggested to me.

The frightful soliloquy in the scene which follows the departure of the messenger, reveals all the diabolical perfidy and cruelty of this monster in human likeness, and this inhuman power with which she is armed in order to succeed in leading her husband to become the instrument of her ambition. In a word, she becomes the Satanic spirit of the body of Macbeth. He has a hard struggle between the "wishing and not wishing"; that woman,

that serpent, becomes absolute mistress of this man, entwines him in her grasp, and no human power can ever tear him from it. Consequently, the first words of this monologue I pronounced in a cavernous voice, with my eyes bloodshot, with the accent of a spirit which comes from the abyss, and I ended it with a *crescendo* of thundering voice, which changed into an exaggerated expression of joy on beholding my husband enter.

During this first scene with Macbeth I show a cold, reserved and patient demureness, not minding at all the weak denials of my husband in his endeavour not to listen to my criminal insinuations. I make it apparent that he will have to yield to my influence. I therefore imagined a counter-scene at the exit of the *personæ*, in order to portray the powerful fascination that this woman exercised upon her husband. I fancy that Macbeth wished to interrogate me again and ask of me further explanations. For the purpose of preventing him, I had the thought of inducing him to pass his left arm around my waist. In that attitude I take his right hand and placing his index finger upon my lips I charge him to be silent, in the meanwhile I am slowly pushing him behind the wings, his back turned to them. All this was executed with a mingling of sentiments and magnetising glances, which fascinations Macbeth could not very well resist.

The hypocrisy, the false humility of Lady Macbeth must be excessive when she goes to meet King Duncan, and with the most perfidious, simulated sweetness invites the old man to enter the castle.

In the following scene between Lady Macbeth and her husband, it is necessary to delineate clearly and strongly two things: First, her energetic reproof of Macbeth for his pusillanimity in not wanting to do at that moment what he had wished a little before—a sudden change of mind caused by his vacillating conscience; second, in contrast with this energy, the fiendish persuasive art that she brings into play in order to render simple and natural the plan of the proposed crime and the impossibility of its detection.

Various are the terrible passages of this scene. The most majestic is the one in which Lady Macbeth

reproves her husband for having so abruptly left the scene, causing his absence to be noticed; and the other in which Macbeth begs his wife not to press him any further, as the carrying through of the projected crime would be a horrible ingratitude . . .

To such a prayer the perfidious woman replies:

". . . . . Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Are thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem.
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i' the adage?"

Everybody knows that she makes allusion to the proverb: "The cat would take the fish without wetting his paw."

Macbeth ". . . . Prithee peace
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none."

At this point Lady Macbeth, in the fear of seeing all her ambitious dream vanish away, in a diabolical tone says:

". . . . . What beast was't then
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that her fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 't is to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this."

After this the vacillation which is characteristic of the nature of Macbeth induces him to ask his wife:

". . . . . If we should fail?"

To which I answer in a sneering way:

". . . . . We fail.
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie, as a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?"

These textual fragments are sufficient to me to confirm my interpretation preceding these lines.

I jump straight to the second act, there being only some clear situations furthering the procedure of the action which do not offer any difficulty in their interpretation, though they embrace the tremendous impressions which, later on, torment the waking hours and cause the agony of Lady Macbeth. All will easily understand the anxiety that she experienced to discover the result of the attempt against Duncan's life, which she had so well planned; the joy of knowing that it was done, the agitation arising from terror which dominated her, the fear and the exaggerated remorse of her husband. The fright she experiences when she hears knocking at the door of the castle with so much insistence, is not caused by a cowardly fear that the crime may soon be discovered, but by the state of prostration of Macbeth which may betray everything.

In the third act there are situations worthy of special comment, which I am going to analyse in detail showing that I have studied to produce them as they were outlined by the author.

It is in this act that one can plainly see the skill of Shakespeare. Lady Macbeth must—not only with words but with her "stage business"—either diminish or enlarge a great many of the striking episodes of the drama. Such considerations led me to make a logical analytical study of this part. For instance, I did not

allow to pass unobserved the entrance of the hired assassin, who comes in to announce to Macbeth the accomplishment of the murder of Banquo, and the failure of the attempt against Fleance's life. This news, which causes two very different forms of emotion, should not escape a watching eye like that of Lady Macbeth. And then again, at the sight of the hired murderer who presents himself in the banquet hall, she must be the only person to see that man speaking in a whisper to her husband, and to notice his excited gestures, never losing sight of him for a moment. She fears some imprudence on his part, remembering that Macbeth has told her shortly before "that a great deed would be accomplished to cause her wonder."

I have taken into consideration that during this scene Lady Macbeth must show her fear, lest the guests may notice this strange conversation between Macbeth and the murderer, in that place and at that moment, and suspect some wrong-doing against themselves. I found it, therefore, necessary to play a double part, a dramatic one with Macbeth and a graceful one with my guests. While taking part in the conversation and the toasts that the guests are making who remain seated upon their stools, I cast at intervals fearful and investigating glances toward my husband and the hired murderer; and in order to draw Macbeth's attention to me and warn him of the danger he runs of betraying himself by some imprudence, I say in a vibrant tone of voice, and with ostentatious jovialty.

". . . . . My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer; the feast is sold
That is not often vouch'd, while 't is a-making,
'T is given with welcome: to feed were best at home;
From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony:
Meeting were bare without it."

With the same "scenic business," but with a more marked accentuation than before, in a reproachful tone, half-serious, half-jesting, I give him the following warning:

". . . My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you."

I utter these words so that Macbeth alone could understand my object in calling his attention. This is apparently justified by the fear that Macbeth should fail to be courteous, and neglect his guests.

I would show great agitation and great fright at the incomprehensible and furious visions of Macbeth, seeing that he is on the verge of revealing the secret of our guilt. Though the reproach is a bitter one, Lady Macbeth, by speaking to her guests, should keep up her pretended gaiety with her facial expression, and apologise for the eccentricities of her husband by attributing them to an old infirmity of his.

In the end, finding that all her efforts at repressing the strange horrors of Macbeth have proved vain, the noble lady sees herself forced to take leave of the guests in an excited manner, in order to be alone with Macbeth and put an end to a situation which becomes dangerous.

After the guests' departure, I thought it best to begin to indicate the state of prostration of Lady Macbeth, by imagining a counter-scene showing distress and failing power, making manifest my painful conviction that it is useless to struggle against the adverse destiny which has suddenly risen before me. I show how remorse begins to torment me, and in showing the beginning of those terrible sufferings I found it necessary for its justification to render realistic the impending end of that great criminal.

At the end of the act, at the moment of leaving, I make it apparent that I am penetrated with a deep sense of pity for Macbeth who for my sake has become the most miserable of men, and tell him:

"You lack the season of all natures, sleep."

I take hold of his left hand with my right and place it over my right shoulder, then painfully bending my head in deep reflection and turning toward my husband with a look filled with the remorse which is agitating my mind, I drag him toward our chamber in the same manner that one leads an insane person. When reaching the limit of the stage Macbeth, frightened by the tail of his cloak trailing at my feet, again shudders

suddenly. Then, with a quick turn, I pass on the other side of him, and try to master the terror with which I am also seized in spite of myself. Using a little violence I succeed in pushing him behind the wings, while quieting him with affectionate gestures.

This mode of acting was not contradictory to the logic and reality of the situation, and always produced a great effect.

In the fifth act Lady Macbeth appears only in a scene of short duration, but which is the most marvellous one among all the philosophical conceptions of the author, and it offers to the actress a very difficult study of interpretation.

This woman, this colossus of both physical and moral force, who with one single word had the faculty of imaging and causing the execution of deeds of hellish character—there she is, now reduced to her own shadow which, like the bony carcass left bare by a vulture, is eaten up by the remorse preying on her mind. In her trouble she becomes so thoroughly unconscious of herself as to reveal in her sleep her tremendous, wicked secret. But what do I say "in her sleep?" It is like a fever which, rising to her brain, softens it. The physical suffering taking hold of her mind with the recollection of the evil of which she has been the cause masters and regulates all her actions, causing her, spasmodically, to give different directions to her thoughts. The very words that the gentlewoman says to the doctor prove it:

> "Since his Majesty went into the fields, I have seen her rise from bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep."

The true rendering of this artificial and double manifestation and the fusing of these effects without falling either into exaggeration or into the fantastic at every change of countenance, of gesture, of voice, all demanded from me a most exhaustive study. I enter the stage with the looks of an automaton, dragging my feet as if they wore leaden shoes. I mechanically place my lamp upon the table, taking care that all my movements are slow and intercepted by my chilled nerves. With a fixed

eye which looks but does not see, my eyelids wide open, a difficult mode of breathing, I constantly show the nervous agitation produced by the derangement of my brain. It was necessary to clearly express that Lady Macbeth was a woman in the grasp of a moral disease whose effects and whose manifestations were moved by a terrible cause.

Having placed the lamp upon the table, I advance as far as the footlights, pretending to see on my hands still some spots of blood, and while rubbing them I make the motion of one who takes in the palms of his hands a certain quantity of water in order to wash them. I am very careful with this motion, which I repeat at various moments. After this I say:

"Yet here's a spot. Out damned spot! out, I say!"

Then listening, I say softly:

"One: two: why, then 't is time to do 't."

Then, as if answering:

"Hell is murky!—Fie, my Lord, fie! a soldier, and afraid? What need you fear? Who knows it, when none can call our power to account."

And at this place, returning to the cause of my delirium:

"Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?"

And I show here that I am struck by the colour of blood in which it seems to me as if I had dipped my hands. Returning to my manifestation of delirium, I add:

"The Thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?"

And looking again at my hands with an expression between rage and sadness:

"What, will these hands ne'er be clean?"

With a convulsive motion I rub them again. Then, always a prey to my delirium, in a bitter tone, and speaking excitedly, I pretend to whisper in Macbeth's ear:

"No more o' that my lord, no more o' that; you mar all with this starting."

Then coming back to my first idea, I smell my hands, pretending they smell of blood, and I break forth with passion:

"Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! oh, oh!"

And I make these exclamations as if an internal shudder convulsed my heart and caused me to breathe with difficulty, after which I remain with my head thrown back, breathing slowly, as if in a deep lethargy.

During the short dialogue between the gentlewoman and the doctor, I pretend in my delirium to be taken to the scene of the murder of Duncan, and, as if the object of my regard were the chamber of the king, bending my body, advancing slowly and mysteriously toward my right side where I imagine the murder has taken place, I pretend that I hear the quick step of my husband and anxiously inclining my ear in the posture of one who waits I express how Macbeth is coming to confirm to me the accomplishment of the deed. Then, with an outburst of joy, as if I saw him appear and announce the deed, feeling very much agitated, I say:

"Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale. I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave."

I took much care never to forget that the woman who spoke was in troubled sleep; and during this scene, between one thought and another, I would emit a long, deep and painful sigh.

The following verses:

"To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate:
Come, come, come, come, give me your hand.
What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed!"

I speak these words in an insistent tone, as if it were a thing that should be done quickly; then, frightened, fancying that they knock at the door of the castle and come to surprise us, I show great emotion, a greater fear, as if I found it necessary to hide ourselves quickly in our own rooms. I start in that direction, inviting Macbeth to follow me, saying in a very imperative and furious tone:

"Come, come, come! . . . " Then, simulating the act of grasping his hand, I show that I am dragging him with great pain, and disappear from the sight of the audience, saying in a suffocating voice: "To bed, to bed, to bed! . . . "

With this ends the "compendium" of the manifestations and of the strange sentiment of this character which seems as though it could not have been conceived by a human mind, and the study of which has proved so difficult to me, owing to the singularity of situations which I saw myself induced to portray according to the imagination of the poet.

Though I flatter myself that I entered into the spirit of this character in the best way I could, I trust this analysis of mine—this interpretation of the part of Lady Macbeth—to the appreciation of the critic. From what I have stated it must be clearly evident what an amount of strenuous study, and how much mental labour such an interpretation cost me.

ADELAIDE RISTORI AS MEDEA

CHAPTER IV

MEDEA—A TRAGEDY BY LEGOUVÉ

WITHOUT making any attempt to review the dramatic art of the remote times and looking only at the present epoch, I will say that the argument of "Medea" was again dramatised in the year 1810 by a renowned Italian writer, Gio. Batt. Niccolini. Though some remarkable evidence of genius appears in this tragedy, which is quite Greek in character—introducing several passages taken from Euripides and Seneca—yet it is deficient in the display of those effects which appeal mostly to the observation of the spectators, and is in places rather diffuse in its dialogue. Consequently, it is not produced as frequently as the other works of this well-known playwright, Signor Niccolini.

Another "Medea" was published later by the Duke Della Valle, which was found to be worthy of consideration on account of his having unfolded its argument in a most concise way. With its grandiose Greek impression, and its striking scenic effects, this tragedy became very popular. There was at that time no great actress who did not perform it, and all the managers of dramatic companies were anxious to add it to their repertoires. However, I never liked to represent that version of "Medea" because, nature having gifted me with a high sense of maternal love, the thought of that mother who with her own hand slays her children, was too repugnant to me. I could not present such a monstrosity upon the stage, and in spite of the pressing requests of my managers to interpret that rôle I was unable to overcome my aversion to it.

At the time of my first visit to France in the year 1855, the dissensions between the celebrated playwright Legouvé and the renowned French tragedienne Mlle. Rachel were of recent date.

After having given a few performances at the Salle Vantadour, with which I had the good luck to captivate the admiration of the Parisians, one morning my maid announced that two gentlemen wished to see me. I had hardly finished eating my lunch, but I let them come in.

"I am Monsieur Scribe"—one of them told me.

"And I am Monsieur Legouvé"— said the other.

Who does not know those names in Italy? At that time they were performing in my country, a large number of Scribe's plays, and several of those belonged to my repertoire, as for instance: "Adrienne Lecouvreur," "Louise Lignarolles," etc. Consequently, on finding myself in the presence of such celebrities I felt rather abashed and, at the same time, happy. We engaged in an interesting and vivacious conversation, in which all of their productions included in my repertoire were passed in review. In consequence of the courteous insistence of my two visitors, I consented to recite to them some passages of "Adrienne Lecouvreur," and they had the kindness to find my interpretation highly satisfactory. Nothing further was said during that visit. But a few days later, I again saw Mr. Legouvé, and the following conversation took place between us:

"Why do you not wish to play my "Medea?"

"My dear Sir," I answered, "owing to a most serious reason. I cherish such a strong affection for children generally that, since the time I was a young girl, whenever I chanced to meet one with a charming little face, with chubby cheeks, and curly blond hair, like a cherub of Raphael, in the arms of a nurse or being held by the hand of a maid, I would kiss him with transport, not caring for the disagreeable looks that those women would cast at me. You will see from this what an adoration I have for children, and you will easily understand that I could not even in fiction pretend to slay children upon the stage. You know that in Italy we also have a 'Medea,' which is very much liked by the public, and which pays good returns to the various theatrical managers who produce it; but as for myself, no matter how great may be the actress who plays it, I never go to see that drama."

From an engraving by H. B. Hall, Jr., New York

ADELAIDE RISTORI IN 1876

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"But my Medea kills her children in such a way that while the audience understands that it is a mother who commits the nefarious crime they do not actually see how she accomplishes the deed."

"Please pardon me, Mr. Legouvé, but I can never be persuaded that the horror that any actress must inspire at that point does not predispose the audience against her."

"Would you at least do me the favour of reading my 'Medea,' and satisfying yourself of the truth of my assertions?"

"If you will let it rest there, for I do not wish to be discourteous to you who are so kind to me; but I do warn you now—so that you won't feel hurt later—that it cannot be possible that your 'Medea' will ever enter my repertoire."

As if nothing had been said, Mr. Legouvé was about to take leave of me with these words:

"Yes, yes, read it and we shall speak about it later on."

But I held him back, adding:

"There is yet another reason which prevents me from performing your 'Medea.' I don't wish at any cost to let anybody suppose that I wish to take advantage of your temporary dissension with Rachel, in order to supplant her in a rôle written for her. Therefore, I could never consent to play your 'Medea,' unless you first engaged yourself to express and to announce publicly your desire that I do so."

"Since Rachel has refused it, what scruple can prevent you from accepting the rôle?"—he said to me.

But he understood the wisdom of my objections and promised to make the declaration I required, if I should accept the part.

The following day, for the sake of obliging him, I took advantage of an hour of freedom, while my maid was dressing my hair, and resolved to read "Medea," yet with a full conviction of wasting my time, as it seemed to me logically to be impossible that its author could conceal the portrayal of the unavoidable catastrophe. In this not very favourable frame of mind, I undertook to pass a judgment upon that work.

With a surprise more easily imagined than described, the reading of the play began from the start to inspire in me so much interest that, while proceeding with it, I would give vent to such exclamations and make such gesticulations that my poor maid, dreadfully astonished, cried out to me:

"What is the matter, my lady, I can no longer dress your hair?"

"Go on, proceed . . . it is nothing . . . don't mind me."

At the end of the first act I found Legouvé's superior to all the other versions of "Medea"—I exclaimed: "Oh, how beautiful it is! What magnificent situations . . . how did Rachel ever renounce such a splendid part as this one? . . . —I could not believe it."

After the second act, my enthusiasm grew and with the greatest eagerness I read on to see how the author produced the climax of the final scene. I was anxious to see what means he had chosen to have the mother kill the children without exciting the horror of the audience.

I cannot find words to express my admiration after reading the complete tragedy. Legouvé had discovered a way to make the killing of the children appear both justifiable and necessary, as the reader will discover for himself at the end of this study.

Possessed with enthusiastic admiration, I allowed the book to slip out of my hands, and was not only willing but anxious to undertake the study of the part.

When I again saw Legouvé, I nearly fell on his neck, exclaiming:

"Yes, yes, I shall play your 'Medea' and we shall arrange together for a feigned scene regarding the killing of the children which will cause the audience to be carried away with enthusiasm."

Without losing any time I looked for somebody to translate the drama into Italian.

Fortunately there was in Paris at that time, in the Italian colony, many of the most renowned literary geniuses of Italy, who had been exiled from home for political reasons. Among these was Signor Montanelli, who seemed to me the best suited of all to translate into

good Italian verse the beautiful work of Legouvé, and it was with much pleasure that Montanelli accepted the difficult task. Our heroic patriot, Daniel Manin, and many others approved of the choice. It was arranged that in the following year the work should be finished.

On my return to Paris in the spring of 1856, we did nothing during eleven days but rehearse with much ardour and nervous activity, in order to hasten the production of the tragedy. A great deal had in the meantime been said about it.

I saw nothing else, I dreamed of nothing else but "Medea." The selection of my costumes caused me a good deal of thought and the many researches I had made had not yet placed me in the way of finding what I wanted. The renowned painter, Ary Scheffer, came to my assistance. He drew a sketch, in minutest detail, of a costume which proved to be most marvellous. He was only embarrassed in choosing the style of the cloak, which needed to be so ample for my first entrance upon the stage but which would later be cumbersome to me in the various attitudes of my acting. With a simple and natural movement I had to allow the wide folds to fall artistically from my shoulders.

The day set for the first performance was the 8th of April, and I, whose natural instinct never permitted me to postpone an appointed date, saw that everything was ready on that day.

At that time any new theatrical venture greatly excited the mind and the curiosity of the people. Both the Italian and French elements were in great suspense concerning this production of "Medea." The Parisians were curious to judge whether Rachel had really been wrong in refusing that rôle after she had accepted, studied, and rehearsed it with artistic interest, and even congratulated its author on the creation of the character.

The Italians, on their side, were investing this experiment of mine with almost a national importance; consequently the excitement was very great. Those among the French people who sympathised with us were the intimate friends of the most noted Italian exiles.

Among the latter I will mention those most dear friends of mine, the two brothers Messrs. Planat de la Faye.

Before the beginning of the performance many people came to my dressing-room to offer me their best wishes, and Ary Scheffer wished to see the effect that my costume would produce, and if it had been reproduced exactly as he had designed it.

Vantadour Hall was crowded with a most select class of people. Mme. Devallière, the daughter of the playwright Legouvé, was in a state of convulsive excitement, owing to her intense emotion. Legouvé himself, well understanding that he was playing one of his best trumps, in consequence of the uproar provoked the year before by the incident with Rachel—was doing his best to dissemble his anxiety.

As for myself, though I appeared to be at ease, I felt a certain sensation . . . my hands were freezing cold. I rubbed them together, saying to those who were near me:

"It seems as if cold air comes from the ceiling . . . I am cold . . . I am shivering."

The curtain rises. A flattering murmur announces the sympathetic attention of the public.

The beautiful speech of Orpheus (Signor Boccomini) was followed by prolonged applause. Oh, how much courage the benevolent demonstrations of an audience inspire in the artists who must yet present themselves!

At last, the moment of my appearance arrives, and I am already waiting upon the platform of the scaffold which represents the lower part of the mountain, from which I pretend to ascend with difficulty. I carry in my arms the little Melyant, who rests his blond head upon my shoulder, and that part of the blue cloak which had, later on, to fall on my back (the cloak which had caused so much apprehension to Ary Scheffer), covers half my head, and almost totally hides that of the child. I had placed the other child, Licaon, at my left side, where he stayed in a posture of excessive weariness. The melody of the Canephores who accompany Creusa to the temple, precedes my coming.

At my appearance the audience bursts forth into loud

RACHEL, ELIZA RACHEL FÉLIX IN 1854
The great French tragedienne of the XIX century. (1821–1858)

and prolonged applause, which does not cease until I begin my lines.

Having reached the top of the mountain I stop suddenly, as if exhausted. This attitude, with many others, I had adopted from my study of the stupendous groups of Niobe which are in the famous Uffizi Gallery of Florence.

When I begin to speak, my lamenting accent demonstrates that the prostration of my body is caused not alone by the suffering and privations I have experienced during my long trip through cliffs and valleys, but also by the discouragement which has overtaken me at the sight of my exhausted children, to whom I can offer only my blood as food. This state of mind is described by Legouvé in a most moving manner and accompanied with fine scenic effects.

The little sick child, almost entirely exhausted, while sitting with his brother upon the steps of the statue of Diana says, in a lamenting tone:

Melyant: I am so tired, mother!
Medea: My child, I suffer with thee, nor can I give thee shelter or a home.
Licaon: I am faint with hunger, mother!

Hearing such heartrending words, in an attitude of despair as if asking myself: "How can I feed them?" I exclaim:

"Oh! could I drain my heart for them and say:
'Here, drink,' I'd let the crimson flood from my veins,
Though life did ooze with every drop."

This despairing tone lasts through the greater part of the act. Only when the wound of my heart reopens at the remembrance of my lost love, the state of prostration ceases and like a plant which, revived by a refreshing dew recovers its vigour, I regain my strength. Thus, through the magnificent scene with Creusa, in which I am made to believe that while I am stricken with pain and suffering, roaming in search of my lost happiness, he could live happily in the arms of one of my rivals—my aspect is transformed, my limbs writhe, my eyes dart fire, my mouth appears as if pouring venom—and with the

appearance of a fury at the question that Creusa would address to me:

"What would you do?"

I answer, looking at her with haggard eye, taking her by the hand, and making her advance to the footlights:

"Do? What does the leopard when
With a terrible and bloody joy it bounds, like a thunderbolt,
Upon its prey?"

I pronounce these last verses with the expression of a wild beast that is about to devour somebody, and making the gesture of tearing my victim to pieces. I remain with such an expression and pose as to inspire fright and horror.

This attitude of ferocity seemed to me logical, not only owing to the nature of Medea, but to that of any woman possessing a strong temperament and capable of excesses either of love or of hate. And such a conviction caused me to form for myself a right criterion, and to serve as a rule through the frequent transitions of my part. It was only after profound study that I succeeded in interpreting these two passions as the author wished, and without detaching myself from the truth.

At the unexpected appearance of Orpheus, the scenic motion changes. At the confirmation he gives me that Jason is still alive, a convulsive joy brightens my face. But when I discover that Creusa is my rival, and hear her boldly challenge my wrath by saying:

"Cease, respect the hero who swore his faith to me!"

I reply, with a ferocious look:

"Thou lovest him?"

"Yes, I love him, and he'll be mine to-morrow
At the temple's rite."

Starting like a wild beast who knows that her prey cannot escape her, with a sneering accent I say:

"He thy husband, beware! . . . . "

At that moment I stretch out my right hand toward her, as if in warning, and remain in that posture until the curtain drops.

ADELAIDE RISTORI AS PHÆDRA

ADELAIDE RISTORI AS MEDEA

Even now I remember with joy that that first act produced the greatest enthusiasm and that I was called out several times, and greeted with the most frantic applause. The so-called "foyer of the artists" was jammed with people. My admirers overwhelmed me with compliments; my friends squeezed my hand with that cordiality which no words can describe but which means a poem of affection. Others crowded around me, their deep emotion making them silent rather than eloquent. It is needless to say that the author of the play was there sharing with me the enthusiasm of the occasion.

They were all expressing their wonder at the exact execution, so well rendered and so well interpreted after a comparatively short number of rehearsals.

In Italy such a tribute would not surprise anybody at all as, owing to the less flourishing theatrical conditions that exist there compared with those of other countries, the obligation of preparing new productions within short notice is more imperious, while in France such preparations last at times for several months!

The second act is filled with situations of marvellous scenic effect thus offering to the actress a large field for the display of her dramatic ability.

The scene between Medea and Jason is one of the best. When Jason hypocritically reproaches himself for having involuntarily subjected his children to a life of hardship and of privations, and is not able to bear the thought that they are again exposed to shame and abuse, he says that it is in his power to relieve them from so much shame, provided their mother be sacrificed for their salvation. I imperiously ask: "In what way?"

Jason: "Break the chains which bind them to adversity."

At such a suggestion, I become terrified. Yet, while endeavouring to restrain myself, I add, with ill-concealed irony:

"Ah, repudiate myself?"

My eyes glare with a murderous expression caused by the tempest which is raging within me.

I cannot here even briefly enumerate the thousand rapid alterations which are expressed in the verses, which precede my caustic answer:

"I see it, see it all."

Giving vent to my hatred and to the desire for revenge, which, according to the unconquerable temper of Medea, should govern every one of my words with the procedure of the scene, I pour out the wrath which I had with difficulty held back. My weakness, my love; all disappear, while the just resentment of a despised, humiliated and derided woman—outraged in all her most dear and vehement passions—is expressed by me with all the ferocity of a Tartar nature:

"Some sweet power compels thee to appease
The gods by my consent to break the union
Ah, why dost thou change thy colour, Jason?
Thou art pale, I'm sorry—but I cannot set thee free."

After having absolutely refused to consent to the severing of our union, I feel assured by Jason's bitter and insulting words that he not only has dared to meet my wrath, but that he has now lost every sentiment of love for me. In spite of myself, I am crushed by the blow. But I express the paroxysm of my grief when Jason, wearied with my reproaches, and not caring for my refusal, is making sure that on the following day I shall be sent into exile, that Creusa will become his wife, and that the breezes which carry my ship away will bring to me the echoes of their nuptial carols. Those threats leave me at first like one petrified; then the most ferocious hatred takes the place of love, and the following words pour out of my mouth like a stream of fiery lava:

"Blood! blood! To drown him in it!
To break, to torture his human heart!"

Like a wild beast entrapped in a cage, I rove around

the scene, as if I am trying to find a terrible way of avenging myself; while the voices of my children who run after me, uttering the sweet name of "mother," are powerless to calm my fury, even when they say to me:

Licaon: "We are your children, mother!"

I answer, vehemently:

"You are Jason's children. Away!"

Licaon: "What have we done?"

Medea ". . . . . No, no . . . . . "
"Accursed things—I hate you, go!
I hate the human race—but you the most
Because he is your father! . . . . . ."

On beholding the sad faces of those two poor children, I exclaim:

"Oh, Jason, Jason, must I know thee false,
And love thee still, or loathing thee,
Must I destroy those little ones? . . . ."

Another affection awakens in me to dominate my nature, and I repeat the touching words:

"The children! . . . Mine! Mine!"

Stretching out my maternal arms, I invite them to run to me, which they do in a transport of joy.

Falling heavily upon a stool, I take the smaller of the two children upon my knee, pressing the other affectionately to my bosom, thus forming a group which produced a great effect upon the audience.

As soon as my excess of motherly tenderness subsides I utter, in a tone of pity:

"Pardon, my children. Forgive thy mother.
You are all she hath, yet is so rich in such possession
That were the gods all Jasons, and she
Their only love, she would not barter
This one sad, fond caress,
To dwell forever in their hearts,
Or be partaker of immortal joy!
. . . . . .
What are you to Jason? The forsaken
Children of Medea! . . . . . ."

Pronouncing that name all the fury of my jealousy would rise in me again. My children frightened by that sudden change, run from my arms.

Left alone to meditate upon the most atrocious means of revenge, I grasp the quickest and most decisive—I will slay my rival!

"It is but true, the poisoned heart arms the hand!"

At the sight of the poignard which I take from under my *peblum*, with a ferocious rage I say:

"Oh, joy! . . . . "

adding, with a threatening voice:

"In the thick of night, to glide like a ghost,
To advance like a shadow. . . . . .
. . . . . .
And behold the corpse of Creusa,
Prostrated at the feet of Medea!"

With this last verse, I rise up straight, my body like that of a giant holding the poignard in my uplifted hand, as if at the sight of it one should feel paralysed. When Creusa comes, I am so filled with the thought of executing vengeance at once that my face assumes a joyful expression, but I quickly hide myself behind a column, ready to fall upon her at a propitious moment.

In rushing toward my rival, I meet her face to face. Creusa advances to me, with the intention of dissuading me from my purpose and says:

"The furious mob follows thee;
If within the palace it enters, thou art lost!
I run!"

Medea: "Where to?"

Creusa: "To save thee!"

With such an answer she disarms my disdain, and

being brought back to the instinct of my royal blood, I repeat, bewildered:

"Thou darest to save me! . . . . save me! . . ."

Noticing the poignard I am holding, I am ashamed of myself, and conceal it with a sense of horror.

Then, a short scene takes place—I beg her, in accents full of pain, to leave that man to me, as he is all on earth to me, but with the decisive refusals of Creusa, my hatred grows again and more powerful than before, and I am about to throw myself upon her, when we hear the cries of the daughter of Creonte, who runs to us frightened, followed by the people.

In the last scene, having taken possession of my children I hold them pressed to my bosom, so that they may not be snatched away from me by the mob, which in a furious way is threatening to stone me, when suddenly Orpheus appears and says, imperiously:

"He who does not love his children,
Let him snatch those innocent infants
From their mother!"

At his presence and hearing those words, the mob reverently draws back, while Creonte, Jason and Creusa stand as if overpowered by the fascination of the divine poet. Feeling comforted by the words of Orpheus, who points me to a safe retreat, I cover my children with my cloak and walk out, murmuring in a soft voice:

"At last I hold my vengeance! . . . . "

It is needless to mention the good effect produced upon the audience by all these dramatic situations.

The stage setting of the third act had been prepared in a truly artistic manner. On the left of the spectators stood a wide tent of Grecian style, showing the entrance of a room to which one ascended by mounting a few steps.

When the curtain rises, Jason is impatiently listening to the admonitions of Orpheus, Creusa comes in, holding by the hands the children of her betrothed, happy in their caresses. A domestic group, a scene of affection and of tender sentiment for the children, whom Creusa is ambitious to adopt as her own. Nursing happy thoughts Jason moves away, followed by his dear ones and behind them comes Orpheus with a sad expression on his face. At that moment I peep in from the threshold of my room, set one foot upon the step and by raising with my right hand the tent, I remain in the dim light, coldly observing this new proof of Jason's treachery.

In a short monologue, I indulge fervently in my revengeful reflections; I am only awaiting the coming of night in order to flee, unobserved, with my children, while in the royal palace they dance at the happy nuptials of Creusa!

These last verses I pronounce with the sarcasm of one who is anticipating a different ending to that festive event.

Orpheus comes back, bearing an order of Creonte, in which it is said, that according to the answers given by the oracle to the king, the presence of Medea had been predicted as a fatal omen, and therefore I am commanded to leave at once, but without my children. Such an announcement pierces like an arrow the heart of Medea, who loves her children more than she hates Creusa. She begs of Orpheus to intercede with the king, that the children may be left to her. In the following scene everything should contrive to make apparent the human nature of that poor woman, placed in such a trying position. One can easily understand at this point how difficult it was to reproduce true to life such a character, in which the continuous contrast between the affection and hatred which agitate her must be marked.

Noticing that all my prayers for obtaining from the immovable Jason permission to take both my children with me are useless, and on hearing that one of them alone can follow me, I address, with the most touching expression, both to Creusa and King Jason my most fervent request. The verdict is unchangeable! Then,

seeing myself abandoned even by my children, who had rushed away and clung to Creusa's skirt, I turn deaf to every word of comfort that they are trying to address to me. I ask to be left alone the prey of my grief. Observing then that my children also have disappeared, with a heart-breaking outburst I cry:

"My children! . . . My children! . . ."

and fall down upon the steps of the altar of Saturn, as if unconscious. After a short pause, I begin the following monologue:

"Alone! Alone! upon this world! No longer a father!
No longer a husband! No more children! Nothing!
And thou darest to cry? . . . ."

Shame takes the place of desolation, and I blush while looking at my hands wet with tears, and exclaim:

"Thou darest to cry! And Jason triumphs!
Yes, in spite of me, all his wish is fulfilled!
My very hand unites him to his mistress!"

Then, going over all the wrongs I had suffered, and bewailing that I myself had unconsciously favoured and procured for Jason the accomplishment of his happiness, rage would again possess me, and while I say: "my very hand unites him to his mistress!" I rise and shake my hand resolutely as though to drive away from my mind the thought of shame. Picturing to myself the joy of their love and happiness, I roar like a wounded lioness:

"Oh, god of hell! Help! help! Blood I want!
A weapon! . . ."

At that point I wish the extermination of all.

At the tender recollection of my children, my fury would somewhat decrease. I shiver at the thought of killing them with my own hand . . . but on reflecting that with that blow I could bring an eternal grief upon Jason, I strangle my natural cry by infusing the

following lines with all the rage of one who no longer fears anything:

"In Jason an everlasting woe to kindle,
That my crime be the instrument of his
Eternal torture. My punishment to hurl him
To the infernal regions!"

And suddenly turning myself to the statue of Saturn:

"Thou, above all, who invok'st
The slaying of children, O Saturn
Hear me! . . . Thy squalid altar bright
With innocent cherubs' blood dost shine,
The horrid offering shal't have from me!"

At that moment my children are led in by the nurse of Creusa. At the sight of them I stand as if petrified by the uttered vow. I order that they be taken away from me, as if I feared to see myself forced to immolate them to the implacable god. On hearing that Jason is awaiting them to join him at the altar, as if to have them witness my infamy, all pity disappears, and becoming again a prey of my fury I resolutely command them to approach me.

I had arranged that after the lines:

"Thy word was true . . . time flies,
The moment is at hand . . . let them approach,
And be my pity deaf. Father and sons,
A single blow shall strike . . ."

Melyant and Licaon throw themselves upon my knees, grasping me with their tender hands while they look at me with beseeching eyes. Moved by that look, I would drop the arm which I had already lifted to strike . . . my voice becomes tender, my hands falling down meet those of the children. At the contact with them a sense of sweetness transfuses my mind, and all idea of vengeance vanishes. With much emotion, in a loving voice I say:

"Their hands! . . . their soft hands! . . . I press!
I stagger . . . my heart is faint . . . my lips
In tender affection inclined to theirs . . .
Ah, ere I strike the blow . . ."

and bending down, I am about to kiss them; but my

vow to Saturn remembering, I turn to the statue as if to implore that he should grant me that moment of joy before I strike the fatal blow.

Again contemplating my children, I show the reawakening within me of the maternal sentiment and bursting into tears I cry:

"No, I am faint to such a deed!
Away from me all my murderous thoughts!
I have my children once more!"

Saying that, I fall between the two, cover them with kisses and press them to my bosom.

At that point Orpheus hurriedly rushes to me, urging me to run away with the children . . . when suddenly distant and confused cries arrest our steps. A girl with dishevelled hair runs to us crying, and announces that Creusa is dying on account of a poisoned veil. Overtaken with desolation I cry:

"Yes, the veil I bade her take!"

Orpheus furiously cries

"Accursed woman! Forsake thy children! . . ."

I answer:

"Never."

At this point I snatch my little Melyant—I raise him—I press him under my arm, while with the other arm I drag Licaon and make an attempt to run. Some of the threatening mob force me to go back. I try in vain to open for myself a passage at the other end, but the cries which come from the palace, "To death! to death!" force me to look for another way of escape. At that point, the mob rushes in like a torrent from every side and tries to take the children from me at the absolute order of the king, who cries:

"Let them be taken . . . murder!"

Then, in a desperate tone I exclaim:

"Never! Never shall you have them!"

and with a spring I rush upon the altar of Saturn, dragging both my children with me. The people of Corinth rush upon me, surround me from every side, when a cry of horror bursts forth from them, which announces that the nefarious sacrifice has been accomplished. The people draw back at such a sight and allow Medea to be seen, her eyes haggard, fixed, her body drawn and contracted like a statue of remorse, her two slain children at her feet.

After a short pause of general terror, the voice of Jason, who is rushing ahead is heard crying:

Jason. "Let myself strike this impious woman! "
Orpheus. "Approach thee not! "
Jason. "The children! " . . .
". . . Slain! "

cries Creonte.

Entering on the scene, Jason in despair cries:

"Slain! . . . By whom?" . . .
"By thee! "

Imperiously and fiercely replies Medea, rising, with her arm outstretched toward Jason, like a picture of inexorable destiny.

The curtain drops.

At the beginning of this study I mentioned the fact that I felt an instinctive repugnance to representing a character which led me to a final scene so revolting, one that rebelled against the most sacred sentiments of nature. The reader knows also why I finally changed my resolve not to impersonate such a rôle; and how, when at last I was induced to do so, the most vivid passion for the character I had been asked to portray had taken hold of me.

I applied myself with much enthusiasm to the study of "Medea." To use an expression common among the French, this tragedy was "*mon cheval de bataille.*" I studied thoroughly the contrast between the two passions, which are as a rule not very common, but which are not, nevertheless, extraordinary ones: jealousy and hatred—from one or the other must necessarily be

derived the thirst for revenge. It was a typical psychological study which found its origin and its explanation in the tendencies of the human mind.

I endeavoured to express the character of Medea in the best possible manner, carrying myself back to antiquity in order to incarnate the impressions of those times, and I am justified in saying that I understood it as well as I should, or could.

CHAPTER V

MYRRHA—A TRAGEDY BY VITTORIO ALFIERI

ANYONE who is familiar with Italian dramatic literature will easily understand that among the many tragedies written by the immortal Vittorio Alfieri, "Myrrha" is the most difficult and extraordinary.

In fact the task of dramatising a situation in which a girl is irresistibly in love with her own father and assailed, from time to time, with transports of furious jealousy against her own mother, is unquestionably an extremely arduous one.

But it should not be considered unworthy or incompatible with the moral sense of the public when we realise that such a passion is conceived of only as the result of fate. Alfieri says that Cecris, the mother of Myrrha, having boasted that the beauty of her daughter should be greater than that of Venus, the offended Goddess revenged herself by infusing through the veins of Myrrha an incestuous love. We all know that mythology deals with numerous examples of monstrous and unrestrained passions into which the question of morality does not enter. Alfieri, with unequalled skill, not only renders admissible such a paradoxical passion, but makes the production of this drama most touching.

The spectator must undoubtedly be moved by a sense of pity through witnessing the incessant and painful struggle of a pure soul against the tortures of a horrible passion. She is the prey to remorse, to shame, and to incomprehensible desires. The very repugnance which she feels is the measure both of her enormity and of her true nature. Alfieri himself expresses pity for her at the end of his tragedy.

No matter how bold the task of the author in his attempt of treating and placing before the public this demonstration of illicit love, one can imagine what a dreadful

COUNT VITTORIO ALFIERI
One of the most important of the Italian dramatic poets. (1749–1803)

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undertaking the interpretation of such a character must be for any actress. I frankly admit that this interpretation was the only study—through all my professional career—in which its great difficulties paralysed my histrionic faculties at the outset.

The task of having to portray the savage contrasts which succeed one another without intermission within the soul of that unfortunate girl, and the continuous struggle with her own cruel sufferings; the task of having to demonstrate that the criminal element in her nature is not her own, and that the power is her own to eradicate from her heart the guilty passion that has become so cruel as to incline her to self-destruction; the task of displaying from time to time the outbursts of that fatal passion, rendering life-like all its terrible effects, seemed to me almost an impossibility.

Since I was a girl of fourteen I had been able, owing to my precociously developed figure, to take the parts of the leading lady, such as Francesca, in "Francesca da Rimini," and up to the end of my professional career I possessed a great facility of imitation, a gift which helped me to incarnate the character satisfactorily no matter what rôle I undertook. It was only with the study of the unnatural rôle of Myrrha that I felt discouraged. If it had only been owing to a sense of vanity that had taken hold of me I should have mastered it, but to master that repugnance appeared to me for a long period of time to be beyond my ability.

In the year 1848, with the sudden change in the form of government in Italy, it was allowable to perform upon the stage and to produce in Rome works which had been previously forbidden by the Pontifical censor. Then the idea struck my manager to present "Myrrha," one of the tragedies placed without the pale. At that time I was about to become the mother of my first child, and it seemed to me preposterous that I should have to take the rôle of a pure and modest girl of twenty possessed with such a horrible love passion.

I opposed myself to it with every means in my power but could not gain release from my managers, who were anxious to increase their box receipts with the production

of this tragedy. As I was dependent upon their authority I could not entirely refuse and, moreover, my fellow-actors of the company urged me to accept the part. I learnt the part of Myrrha, which contains 370 lines, in four days!

How was it possible for me to study and absorb even the fourth part of the rôle and incarnate such a character? I lacked the time to impress upon my mind even the most material part of my rôle, inasmuch as one knows what great difficulties the verses of Alfieri present and how strange is their quality. The result, as might have been expected, was bad and insignificant! I felt so discouraged that I swore I would never again play that tragedy. It was only in the year 1852, when some strong influence was brought to bear, that I changed my mind. The renowned leading-lady, Madame Carolina Internari, who honoured me with a true motherly affection, and who possessed a real genius for tragedy, spoke of Myrrha one day, and reproached me for my pusillanimity in refusing to make another attempt to perform the part. After many persistent refusals she offered if I would comply with her wish, to arrange the most artistic and brilliant feast I could ever imagine. So strong in her was the love for the dramatic profession and for the beautiful in art, that though she herself had always played most successfully the chief part, exciting everywhere the greatest enthusiasm, yet for the sake of inducing me to undertake it she would be willing to play the nurse, Eurycleia, a part of a certain importance—but not that of leading-lady. Her generous proposition conquered me. I renounced my refusals and resumed the study of "Myrrha." But what a strenuous study it was! I meditated over each verse, minutely scrutinising every conception, analysing every word, studying the expression of the eye and finally I succeeded in perceiving how that exceptional character should be interpreted. I had made it a study in which complexities and details had been carefully observed with that love for the dramatic art wnich should appeal to the Italian public of that time, for they were most severe admirers as well as critics, showing a delight often excited to delirium when dramatic performances showed artistic work.

Toward the end of 1852, after three months' hard work, I presented myself upon the stage of the "Teatro Niccolini" in Florence to perform "Myrrha" for the second time. Through having with me the true soul of tragedy, Madame Internari, I was infused with so much courage, so much force, that my blood boiled in my veins, and my imagination carried me away so that I felt identified with the miserable experiences of Myrrha.

That tragedy became entirely my creation, exclusively mine, and it was with that part, in 1855, at the "Salle Vantadour," I captivated the Parisians and the French press was echoed later by the other nations.

If the incestuous love of Myrrha was repugnant the people could not help but admire greatly her inborn sense of chastity with which I would colour my interpretation, bringing out all its sacred and hidden beauty.

My main care was to prove to the public that if the argument appeared at first to be immoral the action was not such. If in the old fable Myrrha appears hateful and despicable, in Alfieri's tragedy the passion of the woman is dominated by the natural chastity of the girl. I had the satisfaction of hearing several mothers say that they had seen nothing in the play to offend the modesty of their daughters. I will, by the way, tell a small anecdote which strengthens my assertion:

A young girl coming home much impressed with what she has seen, argued with her friends and relatives upon the various points of the tragedy and said to them:

"But why is Myrrha so strange and dissatisfied? At times she wants a husband and at other times she doesn't; her parents are always ready; she sets herself the day of the nuptials and does not want to hear of any postponement; she shows that she desires it ardently, but at the last moment she grows angry and becomes a prey to the most furious grief. She rejects her betrothed, sends invectives to her mother and ends the tragedy by killing herself, after having said to her father:

". . : : : Thou wouldst see
Even that sire himself with horror shudder,
If it should reach the ears of . : : Cinyras . : :"

but what was the matter with her?"

Then the father of the ingenuous girl, who was as much impressed with the subject of Myrrha as his daughter, finding himself embarrassed how to answer imagined a pretext worthy of himself and said that the poor girl had swallowed a tarantula.

In fact, to the mind of any person who does not possess a bright intelligence, the furious contrasts of Myrrha are merely confusing.

In the first scene between Myrrha and Pereus, her future husband, I would use all my art to conceal the struggle I had to make evident in that situation in hiding the cause of my martyrdom and the aversion I felt for any man who was not my father. Yet I had to show some points of weakness, as indicated by the author. For instance when Pereus says:

Pereus. ". . . . Thou dost not disdain
To be mine? Thou dost not repent it? And no
Delay whatever? . . ."

Feeling her courage grow faint, Myrrha answers:

Myrrha. "No; 'tis the day; to-day will I be thine.
But let our sails be hoisted to the winds
To-morrow, and for ever let us leave
These shores behind us."

Pereus. ". . . . Do I hear thee right?
With such abrupt transition how canst thou
Thus differ from thyself? It tortures thee
So much to have to leave thy parents dear,
Thy native country; yet wouldst thou depart
Thus speedily, for ever? . . ."

Myrrha. ". . . . Yes; . . . for ever
Will I abandon them: . . and die . . of grief . ."

These lines are a proof of the constant resolution of Myrrha who, certain as she is that she will die through leaving her father, prefers death to prolonging her grievous existence near him.

It is necessary to note as briefly as possible some of these conceptions, some of these lines so hard to express, in order to make the reader acquainted with my interpretation.

Thus in the third act, when Myrrha is asked to speak to her parents, I advance at first with a steady step and

pretend that my sufferings are granting me a moment's respite, and as my mother comes toward me with an affectionate appearance, I place myself so that my father is concealed from my view. Cecris approaching me says:

Cecris. " . . . My beloved child
Do come to us. Come, come."

But after that "come to us," noticing that my father is before me I halt as if taken with a shiver . . . thus explaining why my mother repeated that second "come" as if to signify, "Why dost thou halt?"

Myrrha then says to herself:

Myrrha. "Oh Heav'ns! my father also! . . . "

At the exhortations of Cinyras, at the caresses of my mother, I show to the public the pain of my soul, saying to myself:

Myrrha. ". . . . Is there a torment in the world,
That can compare with mine? . . . "

Urged by my father, and still more insistently urged by my mother, I do not know what pretext to find in order to run away from that abyss and conceal my shameful passion. My internal struggle has no longer any bounds . . . it seems as if my heart would burst.

After a superhuman effort not to betray myself, I resolutely murmur:

Myrrha. "Myrrha, this is the last conflict.
Be strong, my soul. . . . "

At the sight of the miserable state of his daughter and hearing of the sufferings she is in, with an authoritative voice my father says:

Cinyras. "No, this shall never be. Thou lov'st not Pereus;
And, spite of inclination, thou, in vain,
Wouldst give thyself to him. . . ."

Then with a cry uttered from the depths of my soul, seeing my last effort to escape from that wicked passion vain, I exclaim:

Myrrha. "Ah, do not ye
Take me from him; or quickly give me death."

After a short pause, as if to recover my strength and explain the constant alternative of my proposals, I continue:

Myrrha. " 'Tis true, perchance, I love him not as much
As he loves me; . . and yet, of this I doubt.
Believe, that I sufficiently esteem him;
And that no other man in all the world,
If he have not, shall ever have my hand.
I hope that Pereus, as he ought to be,
Will to my heart be dear; by living with him
In constant and inseparable faith,
I hope that he will make both peace and joy
Return to me again: that life may be
Still dear to me, and peradventure happy.
Ah! if I hitherto have loved him not
As he deserves, 'tis not a fault of mine,
But rather of my state; which makes me first
Abhor myself. . . Him have I chosen once;
And now, again I choose him; long for him,
Solicit him, and him alone. My choice
Beyond expression to yourselves was grateful;
Be then, as ye did wish, as now I wish,
The whole accomplish'd. Since I show myself
Superior to my grief, do ye so likewise.
As joyfully as may be, soon will I
Come to the nuptials: ye will find yourselves
Some day made happy by them."

By entering into the spirit of the poet, I endeavoured to make real the unheard of effort that unhappy girl made in trying to reject the paternal caresses of her father, and attribute her grief to a temporary and unknown cause.

At the sight of that horrible struggle in a soul, the prey of a guilty passion whch she is unable to suppress, who would not be moved to pity for the unfortunate child, the victim of an adverse fate.

I take every possible care never to meet the gaze of my father, without neglecting to make the spectator notice my jealous ire against my mother, seeing her to be the recipient of his conjugal cares and love.

One of these moments, I may mention, was when Cinyras has been listening to the reasons that his daughter gives to show the necessity for her leaving him. She sadly approaches her mother and embraces her saying:

Cinyras. "And thou, sweet consort, standest motionless,
In tears? . . . Consentest thou to her desire?"

From an Engraving by Ch. Geoffroy

ADELAIDE RISTORI AS MYRRHA

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With that caress, I pretend to make an attempt to prevent such an effusive impulse; and feeling suddenly ashamed, I wrap myself in my cloak and run to the back of the stage. I then take leave of my parents with these words:

Myrrha. "Now for a little while, do I retire
To my apartments: fain would I appear
With tearless eyes before the altar; meeting
My noble spouse with brow serene, and cheerful."

I exchange a touching embrace with my mother and approaching my father, who is anxious to receive my embrace, I avoid it by bowing down before him with a simulated expression of respect, showing the ardour which has possessed me. Then, overtaken with the most intense anguish, I rush behind the scenes.

At the beginning of the fourth act the author represents Myrrha, in a calm and serene frame of mind, smiling in such a way as to cause Eurycleia to say:

Eurycleia. "A cruel and a mortifying joy,
That thou dost manifest in leaving us. . . "

This joy appears to be the natural consequence of the satisfaction that Myrrha experiences in that moment, believing she has conquered the obstacles which were opposing her departure. In that way she can withdraw herself from the power her fatal enemy exercises upon her.

Myrrha. "Yes, much-loved spouse; for this tender name
Already I accost thee; if a wish
My bosom ever fervently inspired,
I am all burning at the break of day
To go from hence, in company with thee,
And so I will. To find myself at once
With thee alone; no longer to behold
Displayed before my sight the many objects
So long the witnesses, perchance the cause,
Of my distress; to sail in unknown seas;
To land in countries hitherto unseen;
To breathe a fresh invigorating air;
And evermore to witness at my side,
Beaming with exultation, and with love,
A spouse like thee; all this, I am convinced
Will in a short time make me once again
Such as I used to be. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . Do thou,
Of my abandon'd and paternal realm,

Of my disconsolate and childless parents,
In short, of nothing, that was once my own,
Once precious to my heart, remind me ever,
Nor even breathe to me their thrilling names.
This, this will be the only remedy
That will for ever stanch the bitter fount
Of my all-fearful, never-ceasing tears."

This shows how different Myrrha was when not in the presence of her father. Then she knew well how to conquer her internal passion and dominate herself, but with the appearance of Cinyras, in order to show the contrast and the instantaneous effect that the sight of her father produces, I succeed in making evident the chill which runs through my veins. My hair rises . . . my agitation is profound and unconquerable. The public noticing that, shows its sympathy for me. This is one of the most intense situations of the tragedy.

With the reawakening of the fury of Myrrha, the chorus begins the first verse of the nuptial rite. Then her face becomes of a deathlike pallor . . . her limbs contract . . . Her nurse, the only one who notices this, approaches her frightened, and whispers:

Eurycleia. "Daughter, what ails thee? dost thou tremble? . . .
Heav'ns! . . . "

To which Myrrha answers, tremblingly:

Myrrha. "Peace. . . . peace. . . ."
Eurycleia. " . . . But yet . . . "

Then resolutely and with authority:

Myrrha. " . . . . No, no; I do not tremble."

Meanwhile, tears in abundance run from her eyes.

This is one of the most magnificent passages of this act. I recollect that it cost me a great deal of study, to interpret exactly the moral torment of Myrrha, caused by the insistent questions of her mother, and the struggle within herself to accomplish her nuptials even at the sacrifice of her life. Two powerful situations are expressed in the following lines:

Cecris. "Thy count'nance changes? . . . Thou art faint,
and trembling? . . .
And scarce thy falt'ring knees. . . . "

Myrrha. " . . . . . For pity's sake,
Do not, O mother, with thy accents bring
My constancy to too severe test:
I cannot answer for my countenance; . . .
But this I know, the purpose of my heart
Is steady and immutable."

But when the chorus reaches the third line of the nuptial hymn:

Chorus. "Pure Faith, and Concord, lasting and divine,
Have placed in this fond couple's breast their shrine;
And fell Alecto, and her sisters dread,
In vain their torches' lurid glare would shed
On the brave bosom of the bride so fair,
Whose praises all our pow'r exceed:"

the chest of Myrrha expands in an endeavour to repress and conceal the terrible tempest which rages within. When she hears:

Chorus. "While deadly Discord, frantic with despair,
Upon himself in vain doth feed. . . . "

At those words I show that Myrrha had reached the paroxysm of her despair, that her ire will explode like thunder, and crazy with rage, I exclaim:

Myrrha. "What is that ye say? My heart already
By all the baneful Furies is assail'd.
See them; the rabid sisters round me glare
With sable torches, and with snaky scourge:
Behold the torches, which these nuptials merit. . . "

At that point I transform the expression of my face, as if I were the prey of delirium, and after a short pause, I say, frightened:

Myrrha. "But what? the hymns have ceased? . . . Who to his breast
Thus clasps me? Where am I? What have I said?
Am I a spouse already? . . . "

After these words, with a quick turn of my person, I find myself face to face with my father who, with his arms on his chest, is looking at me in a threatening way! Struck by that glance, my blood grows chill, my courage fails and crying: "Alas!" I fall upon the ground, as if struck by lightning.

Then, slowly the mother and the nurse lift me up, endeavouring to bring me back to life. Without my having reacquired my senses, and only owing to the magnetic

effect of my father's voice, I hear confusedly his austere and threatening words. Then I answer in a subdued tone of voice, hardly audible:

Myrrha. ". . . . . Yes:
'Tis as it should be: Cinyras, be thou
With me inexorable; for naught else
I wish; naught else I will. He, he alone
Can terminate the bitter martyrdom
Of an unhappy and unworthy daughter—
Plunge thou within my breast that vengeful sword,
Which now is hanging idly by thy side:
Thou gavest me this wretched, hateful life;
Take thou it from me: lo! the last, last gift
For which I supplicate thee. . . Ah, reflect,
If thou thyself, and with thy own right hand,
Dost not destroy me, thou reservest me
To perish by my own, and for naught else."

Alfieri continually shows that the love of Myrrha cannot be mastered, except with death!

I again faint with my last words, without noticing that I am held by my father also.

In the two following scenes, Myrrha comes slowly back to herself, and having remained alone with her mother, experiences a mingling of pity, of anguish, of remorse, and even of jealousy by seeing her hated rival at her side, the one who possesses the love of Cinyras, and when Cecris tells her:

Cecris. ". . . . . I rather will
From this hour forth perpetually watch
Over thy life."

Myrrha, beside herself with rage, answers:

Myrrha. ". . . . . Thou watch o'er my life?
Must I, at ev'ry instant, I, behold thee?
Thou evermore before my eyes? Ah, first
I will that these same eyes of mine be closed
In everlasting darkness: I myself
With these my very hands would pluck them first
From my own face. . . "

And when Cecris adds:

Cecris. ". . . O Heav'ns! What hear I? . . Heav'ns!. . .
O daughter! . . . I the cause? . . . But, see, thy tears
Gush forth in torrents. . . ."

with a ferocious, despairing voice, she answers:

Myrrha. ". . . . . Yes, thou, alas! hast been,
In giving life to such an impious wretch,
The cause of all my woes!"

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But, feeling immediately moved by the looks of her angered mother, and knowing those horrible words have come to her lips owing to an irresistible impulse, she is ashamed of having allowed herself to be carried away by wrath. Her natural kindness of heart then triumphs, and blushing, she felt her power abandoning her, and while allowing herself to be softly dragged away to her room, she would caress and kiss her mother affectionately.

Cinyras, in a desperate state, having heard of the death of the unhappy Pereus, wants to put an end to his wretched life and have at any cost a talk with Myrrha, having resolved to speak to her with his disdainful paternal authority. Behold, she is advancing. The lines that Alfieri puts upon his lips before Myrrha shows herself to the public, clearly indicate the frame of mind she must be in.

Cinyras. ". . . . . Alas, how she approaches
With tardy and reluctant steps! It seems
As if she came to die before my eyes."

And then, clad in a simple Greek tunic of white woollen, my hair dishevelled, pale and with haggard eyes looking down and with unsteady steps, I come in.

The public would at a glance understand my sinister intention and be prepared to witness the unavoidable catastrophe. As soon as I am in the presence of my father I am like one petrified, bending my head and awaiting my condemnation.

During the address of Cinyras to Myrrha, in order to find out the reason of her martyrdom, it is evident that not only does the flame of love consume her, but it is an obscure flame, unworthy of her, or else she would not have concealed it from all. Without a word but denials and interrupted monosyllables, with gestures of pain and unspeakable anguish, I make a counter-scene to arrange almost a dialogue with my father.

When Cinyras says:

Cinyras. "But who is ever worthy of thy heart,
If Pereus, true, incomparable lover,
Could not indeed obtain it?"

I arranged that he, in saying those lines, should turn to the side where Pereus had killed himself, while I, filled

with love at the sound of his pitiful voice, extend my arm as if by an involuntary impulse, pointing to "him," as the only one who deserves it. But Cinyras suddenly turns, and I lower my eyes, drawing back in order not to be surprised in that attitude. Then seeing myself on the point of betraying myself, and not feeling any longer the strength to oppose his urging, I say, in a voice filled with bitterness:

Myrrha. ". . . . . O death, O death,
Whom I so much invoke, wilt thou still be
Deaf to my grief? . . ."

Noticing that escape is impossible, that any pretext is useless to combat the absolute will of Cinyras, and resolving to reveal my secret, I exclaim:

Myrrha. ". . . . . O Heav'ns!. . . .
I love yes, since thou forcest me to say it;
I desperately love, and love in vain."

Then as if I hoped that such a confession would prove sufficient, I say nothing further except:

Myrrha. "But, who's the object of that hopeless passion,
Nor, thou, nor anyone, shall ever know:
He knows it not himself . . . and when I
Almost deny it to myself."

After my father's answer, in which he protests that he wishes to save his daughter at any cost, and seeing that I cannot longer avoid a most painful confession, I break forth beside myself:

Myrrha. ". . . Me saved? . . . What dreamest thou? . .
These very words accelerate my death. . . .
Let me, for pity's sake, ah, let me quickly
For ever . . drag myself . . from thee . . .

Resolutely I am about to run, but am restrained by the affectionate cry of my father:

Cinyras. ". . . . . O daughter,
Sole, and beloved; O, what say'st thou? Ah!
Come to thy father's arms."

Overcome by the violence of love, as if a supernatural power attracted me to him, filled with passion, I am about to fall into his arms, but at that contact, hardly touching him, I am filled with horror and draw back, repulsing him.

When, finally, there is no longer any possible chance of hiding the wicked flame which burns her, Myrrha finds with a single phrase the way to reveal herself and, stammering in a subdued voice, says:

Myrrha. ". . . . Thou wouldst see
Even that sire himself with horror shudder,
If it should reach the ears of . . . Cinyras."

I pronounce this name as if all the passion of my soul had brought it to my lips, remaining motionless for an instant, my eyes fixed upon him, awaiting his answer.

My heartrending grief has no longer any limit, when Cinyras, having understood the true sense of the words he has heard, swears to relieve his daughter forever from that insane passion. At such a threat Myrrha, unable to stand the thought of being forever abandoned by her father, and thinking of her mother who will live always happy in his arms, gives way to her jealous passion, saying:

Myrrha. "O happy is my mother! . . . she, at last,
Press'd in thy arms . . may breathe . . her
last sigh . . . "

The accentuation, the gesture, the look filled with immense love can no longer leave the slightest doubt in Cinyras of the meaning of those words. Then Myrrha, realising that she has no other way to escape from dishonour, with a sudden and quick gesture, takes the poignard from the side of her father and stabs herself in the heart, saying:

Myrrha. ". . . . Lo! . . . to thee . . .
I now restore it. . . . I at least possess'd
A hand as swift and desp'rate as my tongue."

and falls dying upon the floor. At that moment Cecris and Eurycleia rush in.

Being held by the arms of the nurse, and hearing Cinyras about to reveal the awful passion to his wife, I make an attempt to rise, and with pitiful gestures I beg him not to proceed but to spare me the shame of that fault. But my prayer is in vain, and gasping I fall on the bosom of Eurycleia. Left alone with her, in a

dying voice and an accent of reproach, I would speak these last lines:

Myrrha. ". . . . . When I ask'd . . .
It . . . of thee . . . thou . . . O Eurycleia. . .
then . . .
Shouldest . . . have given . . . to my hands . .
the sword;
I had died . . . guiltless . . . guilty . . . now I
die. . . . "

and I fall heavily, dead, upon the floor.

In the analytical exposition of this very difficult study, I hope I have succeeded in impressing the reader with my endeavour to reach Alfieri's conception of the part, and also to demonstrate how an impure passion, enclosed in that innocent soul, may be able to inspire a sense of pity for the unhappy girl, the victim of the wrath of Venus.

In order to prove how great was the repentance and the remorse of Myrrha, I will repeat what Ovid makes her say:

"Oh Gods! If any one of you is accessible to the voice of repentance, I have deserved the most cruel martyrdom and am ready to meet it. But I wish not to offend either the looks of the living nor those of the shadows by descending to the dead. Hence do exclude me out of both kingdoms, and with a metamorphosis deny to me equally life or death."

The repentant finds the Gods merciful, and the last wishes of Myrrha were fulfilled. She was still speaking when the earth began to cover her feet. Roots grew out of her toenails to hold the stalk that would grow. Her bones became solid wood, still preserving their marrow; her blood turned into syrup, her arms became long branches, her fingers twigs and her skin a hard bark. The size of her trunk disappeared within the thickness of the trunk of the tree which already reaches her chest and is about to encircle her neck. Myrrha, without opposing herself to the progress of the tree, meets it by immerging her face in it. Though she has lost her last senses of the body, she still weeps, and those tears possess a great

virtue. The perfume that comes out of them bears her name and will be venerated through the coming ages.

Est tales exorsa preces: "O, si qua patetis
"Numina confessis, merui, nec triste recuso
"Supplicium. Sed, ne violem vivosque superstes,
"Mortuaque extinctos, ambobus pellite regnis,
"Mutataeque mihi vitamque necemque negate."
Numen confessis aliquod patet. Ultima certe
Vota suos habuere deos. Nam crura loquentis
Terra supervenit, ruptosque obliqua per ungues;
Porrigitur radix, longi firmamina trunci;
Ossaque robur argunt; mediaque manente medulla,
Sanguis it in succos, in magnos brachia ramos,
In parvos digitos; duratur cortice pellis.
Iamque gravem crescens uterum perstrinxerat arbor,
Pectaroque obruerat, collumque operire parabat.
Non tulit illa moram venientique obvia ligno,
Subsedit, mersitque suos in cortice vultus.
Quae, quanquam amisit veteres cum corpore sensus,
Flet, tamen, et tepidae manant ex arbore guttae.
Est honor et lacrymis; stillataque cortice Myrrha
Nomen herile tenet, nullique tacebitur aevo.

CHAPTER VI

PHÆDRA—A TRAGEDY BY JEAN RACINE

It is worthy of note that Racine, in composing his magnificent tragedy of "Phædra," found his inspiration in all that is beautiful and true in the tragedies of Seneca and Euripides, the two great masters of tragic composition. Both of their tragedies bear the title of "Hippolytus."

This is what Racine says in the preface of his "Phædra":

Quoique j' aie suivi une route un peu différente de celle de cet auteur (speaking of Euripides) *pour la conduite de l'action, je n'ai pas laisse d'enrichir ma piece de tout ce qui m'a paru eclatant dans la sienne.*

(Although I have followed a little different route from the one of this author (meaning Euripides) for the procedure of the action of the play, yet I have not hesitated to enrich my drama with all that has seemed to me most striking in his.)

As an illustration of this, Racine found the first scene that Phædra has with the nurse Œnone in the tragedy of Euripides so wonderful that he wished to imitate it by introducing Phædra in the first act of his own drama.

Euripides also represents her as ready to die, seeing that she is unable to conquer with chastity "that guilty and impure love."

A masterly conception, and entirely his own, is Racine's manner of giving a total change to the action at the end of the first act. He has the announcement of the supposed death of Theseus, brought to the queen by the maid Panopa, at the very moment when Phædra is overcome by bitter remorse for her illegitimate passion, and having certainty besides of never being able to satisfy it, she is so hateful even to herself that she has decided to allow herself to die of languor.

Like a flash of lightning joy finds a place in her heart

JEAN RACINE
The great French tragic poet. (1639–1699)

when she sees death break the tie which renders her love a wrong and desperate one.

Phædra. ". . . . . he broke the chain
Which made him execrable and desperate."

Her remorse is silent. The sweet hope that Hippolytus, after knowing of the death of his father, may respond to her affection, gladdens her mind as a ray of sunshine in the midst of a furious tempest. Like a young girl who hears for the first time some sweet words whispered in her ear from loving lips, Phædra listens to the persuasive and insinuating words of her nurse. The prey of a thousand contrary sentiments of affection, a soft smile comes to her pale lips, and she decides to preserve her life and to abandon herself entirely to Œnone, making believe, that only for "the love of her son" she consents to renounce her firm determination to die.

Racine by introducing this episode in his tragedy has demonstrated that he has understood all the truth and the beauty of the manner in which Seneca, in the third scene of the second act, causes Phædra to reveal to Hippolytus, the passion she feels for him.

She at first feigns perplexity when resolving to reveal herself. Then comes the *crescendo* which leads her to her confession, which rouses only fury and disdain in Hippolytus. Racine changes the action of the drama in this: He places in the 3d act the perfidious web of lies woven by Œnone against Hippolytus, in order to save her beloved and unfortunate queen, and changes the incriminating silent assent that Seneca causes Phædra to give to a guilty action into noble rejections the consent to such wickedness. It is also true that Phædra, in Racine's tragedy as well, agrees that Œnone accuses the innocent Hippolytus of an infamous plot; however all this is justified by the terrible situation in which the author places her.

Theseus, who was believed to be dead, comes back and is about to discover, at any instant, her guilt and her shame. Phædra, certain as she is that her son will not betray her adulterous passion, though she has previously demonstrated her repugnance in consenting that

Hippolytus may be accused of her own fault, says:

"That I should deny him? That I should lose him? Never!"

Seeing him approach her with his father a terror assails her, she almost loses her reason and, hardly understanding the words of Œnone, gives her assent to that crime, as the only means to save her from the fury of her husband and release her from dishonour.

Phædra. ". . . . . Ah! I see Hippolytus;
In his insolent eyes I see my fall written,
Do what thou wilt, I abandon myself to thee.
In the perplexity in which I am, I can do nothing for myself."

Seneca, Euripides and Racine make Phædra die for three different causes. Seneca has it that she goes into a terrible rage when she learns the tragic end of "Hippolytus," which she has really caused by the perfidious accusation made against him by way of revenge for his rejection of her. She is assailed with bitter remorse at the sight of that mutilated corpse of the miserable young man, sacrificed for her by her father, and she throws herself in despair upon the corpse of Hippolytus. Tearing her hair she reveals to Theseus all the immensity of her guilt, of her perfidy, for which she finds a just punishment in death, and she kills herself with her own hand by stabbing herself with a poignard in the presence of her husband.

Euripides, in his "Hippolytus," makes Phædra appear the unhappy victim of a celestial vengeance, and, as such, worthy of pity. This increases when Phædra learns of the furious grief of Hippolytus because of the impure passion that his stepmother feels for him and which the slave Œnone has revealed to her. Filled with shame, and furious that Hippolytus is aware of her love for him, she desires to escape his contempt and decides to die. She accomplishes the fatal deed by strangling herself. This extenuates the guilt of her impure love and renders Phædra an object of compassion; but for the fact that Euripides makes Diana tell Theseus, after the unfortunate end of Hippolytus, that Phædra before killing herself conceives the guilty design of writing a paper in which she accuses Hippolytus of having dragged her to that desperate end through having dishonoured her by force.

This low and unworthy calumny causes her to become a despicable object and changes to disdain and horror the pity that one had at first felt for her.

These are the lines that Euripides makes Diana speak to Theseus:

"Why of an iniquitous death
Did'st thou kill thy son, oh villain,
And happy now dost live? To falsehood
And to dark words of thy wife
Thou lend'st faith, and guilty
Art thou of a committed murder."
. . . . . .

Racine, on the contrary, treats the end of this queen more nobly. He makes her feel shame at having revealed her impure passion for Hippolytus on seeing herself rejected with horror and despised by him. She is not able to stand the scrutinising looks of Theseus, feeling herself guilty, yet consumed with jealous rage on discovering in Aricia a fortunate rival. Defying the wrath of her father Minos, when he would descend to Hades; torn with remorse for having yielded to the perfidious insinuations of Œnone, and accusing Hippolytus of her own guilt, she swallows a powerful poison that had come from Mædia. With the sweat of death on her brow she drags herself before Theseus, and gathers together her small remaining strength in order to proclaim the innocence of Hippolytus and accuse herself alone of her impure and vehement love for him. She affirms that she had wished to put an end to her days with a poignard, but she wanted first to confess her crime, at any cost, and so had chosen a slow poison. She expires amidst horrible pain, unconscious even of the death of Hippolytus. This as shown by the following lines:

Panopa in the fifth scene of the fifth act, comes rushing in to Theseus and says:

"I am ignorant what project the queen meditates,
My lord, but I fear all from the transport which agitates her
A mortal despair is painted on her visage;
The paleness of death is already her complexion.
Already from her presence driven with shame,
Œnone has cast herself into the deep sea;
They know not from whence springs this furious
design,
And the waves forever have ravished her from my eyes."

Theseus. "What do I hear?"

Panopa. "Her death has not calmed the queen.
The grief seems to increase in her uncertain soul.
Sometimes, to flatter her sweet sorrows,
She takes her children and bathes them in tears;
And suddenly, renouncing the maternal love,
Her hand with horror repulses them away:
She drags herself with uncertain step heedlessly
here and there
Her eye all wandering recognising us not;
Three times has she commenced to write: and
changing the thought
Three times she has destroyed the commenced letter.
Deign to see her, my lord, deign to succour her."

After this scene Theramenus presents himself and weeping tells of the tragic end of the miserable Hippolytus whose lacerated body had been found near Mycenæ. At the royal palace the horrible deed was unknown; hence Phædra did not kill herself on account of that, but on account of what has been said above.

Some people may find it superfluous to make a detailed comparison of the way in which the character of Phædra has been treated in the three tragedies of Seneca, Euripides and Racine. But I hope that this study of mine may be of some interest to those who have seen me play that part on the stage as well as to those who have never had the opportunity of doing so in order to make known to them how I interpreted that part.

After having heard of the great difficulties I met in the study of the character Myrrha, of Vittorio Alfieri, one may suppose that the study of Phædra was less strenuous. It is so to a certain extent because its contrasts are less strange and less terrible, but one must not neglect to say that the interpretation of these two characters are analogous, both heroines being victims of the vengeance of Venus.

Venus did not hate Phædra, but she hated Hippolytus, and by inoculating Phædra with a strong, incestuous passion of love, chose her as the only means offered to her to avenge herself upon Hippolytus because he had called her "a wicked Goddess"; because he was disobedient to the laws of love and because also, he professed all his worship for Diana, daughter of Jupiter, whom

only he adored, calling her "The Greatest of all Goddesses." (This is what Euripides makes Venus say in the first scene of his tragedy). Likewise Myrrha was nothing more than the instrument of the vengeance of Venus against her mother, Cecris.

The effects of such a curse thrown upon two such different natures must undoubtedly be revealed in two entirely opposite manners. One is a pure maiden represented as forced by a mysterious and invisible power to a nefarious passion, and owing to the horror which it produces in her she goes to meet her death in order not to become guilty.

The other is the woman who is conscious of the monstrous consequences her wicked passion may lead to, but she does not struggle against it and wishes to die only in the fear that if her passion is revealed it may not be reciprocated.

Myrrha dies because she is unable to find in her youthful and weak nature the strength to dominate her ardent passion, and fears that it may be discovered by the one who inspired it, and she kills herself when a superhuman force tears from her lips the confession of her secret. Phædra, on the other hand, being fascinated and dazzled by the beauty of Hippolytus, with her own lips and with accents of fire, with a scintillating eye and in a paroxysm of furious passion, reveals herself to him who inspires her love. What leads her to a dying state is the knowledge that another woman is preferred to herself, together with the remorse of having accused Hippolytus of his fatal love, thus leaving him the prey of his paternal wrath.

Having mentioned the two distinct interpretations I have made in the psychological study of these two characters, who, both being overcome with an abnormal passion, possess many points of resemblance, I will now show how I have interpreted, studied and executed the character of Phædra.

. . . . . .

Racine precedes the entrance of Phædra in the first act with some verses of the nurse Œnone, in order to portray her as if she were dying and only anxious to see the light of the sun before taking leave of life. I deem it

necessary to transcribe them so that the reader may himself form a criterion of how I looked when appearing on the stage.

Œnone. "Alas! my lord, what trouble can be equal mine?
The queen touches her fatal end.
In vain to observe her day and night I attach myself:
She dies in my arms of an evil she conceals from me.
Her disturbed grief tears her on her bed:
She wishes to see the day, and her deep sorrow
Orders me always to drive away every body—
She comes."

Truly, Phædra enters the stage pale and prostrated and supported by her maids, not even having the strength to speak.

My study here consisted in finding the right tone of voice and the exact expression of the state of Phædra, caused not by a physical but by a moral state, which weakening the body would later be followed by a reaction at the announcement of some happy event. Otherwise how could I be able to last until the end of the action, and stand so many emotions and accomplish so many deeds? Thus, in all the expressions of tediousness, of discomfort, I had to maintain a sort of feeble and monotonous recitation. Only when the chord of my profound love was shaken, and its sound painfully vibrated, then my voice would rise suddenly only to die in my chest again, the prostrated state of my body lacking the power of continuance.

As an example, Œnone reproached Phædra for abandoning herself as she does to her grief which is killing her, for concealing its cause from all and in that way bringing about the misfortune of her children who will be forced to bear a strange yoke, the one expressing herself thus:

Œnone. "You offend the gods, authors of your life,
You betray the husband to whom faith binds you;
You deceive in a word your miserable children,
Whom you precipitate under a miserable bondage.
Think that one some day will ravish them from you,
And render hope to the son of a foreigner;
To this fierce enemy of you, and your blood,
This son which an Amazon has carried in her side,
This Hippolytus. . . . ."

Phædra. Ah, gods!

Œnone: This reproach touches you?

Phædra: Wretched woman, what name has passed your lips?

(This dialogue is a complete imitation of Euripides.)

During the recital of these verses I remain at first as if insensible to every reproach of Œnone, at the recollection of the children! But at the point where she tells me:

"And render hope to the son of a foreigner;"

my body shakes, and during the two successive verses:

"To the fierce enemy of you, and your blood,
This son which an Amazon has carried in her side",

my state of prostration ceases, my forehead frowns. . . I tremble all through my body, my chest palpitating.

But when I hear the words: "This Hippolytus," suddenly the outburst of my heart manifests itself with the cry:

"Wretched woman, what name has passed your lips?"

and I fall back upon my seat.

When, after the repeated requests of Œnone to make me reveal the cause of my grief, I resolve to speak, my voice can hardly come forth. It begins to strengthen only when with a lamenting sound I am deploring the lot of my mother and sister, who were also the victims of the implacable hatred of the Goddess, and when Œnone frightened questions me:

"Do you love?"

as a wild beast struck by the arrow of the hunter, with a despairing voice I answer:

" . . . Of love I have all the frenzy!"

The greatest outburst I utter after Œnone says:

"Hippolytus! Great Gods!"

with an impetuous resentment I answer:

"It is thou that hast named him."

Making a long pause I remain in a disdainful attitude. When that paroxysm is ended my strength again gives away, and in a state of lassitude I again fall upon my seat.

Then, after casting a glance around me to ascertain that no one is listening, I begin to narrate the origin of my fatal love, and all the pretexts I had imagined to send Hippolytus away from me. I start at first in a whisper, in order to show the state of prostration I am in and to which I had been reduced by my previous struggle. Then, with the progress of my narrative I, little by little, grow more animated and at the point where I am expressing the ineffable sweetness that the remembrance of the dear looks of Hippolytus produce on my soul, my face assumes a certain radiancy.

> "In vain upon the altars my hand burnt my incense.
> When my mouth implored the name of the goddess,
> I adored Hippolytus, and beheld him without ceasing."

At the appearance of the maid Panopa I collect my scattered wits and at the announcement of the death of Theseus, my looks change, to express a mingling of stupor, of ill-concealed joy at seeing the obstacle which hung between the accomplishment of my vows so unexpectedly removed. I had, however, a care to restrain myself, hiding my thoughts even from the faithful Œnone. When Panopa had left, I listened to the flattering words of my nurse with the satisfaction of one to whom an unexpected happiness has come in which he dares not place much faith for fear that, like a beautiful dream, it will vanish. During the speech of Œnone, in which she attempts to persuade me that from now on I shall be able to see Hippolytus without fear, that my passion has become similar to that of others, the obstacle which made me guilty having been removed, I turn my body so that she cannot see my face, which I take care to conceal in part with my rich and wide veil which falling down from my head covered all my body. In that manner I am able, with a counter-scene analogous to my sentiments, to show the audience how the words of my faithful nurse, as a healing balm, are giving me back life and love. Then, deceiving her as to the true reason of my change, I show that only consideration and affection for my son have made me resolve to live, and preceded by Œnone, leaning with my right hand on her shoulder, I leave the stage

with slow steps, as my limbs cannot yet have regained their former vigour.

The renowned La Harpe maintains that Phædra had really resolved to preserve her life for the love of her child. My idea is different, for the expressions of Phædra regarding this point, in the scene of the avowal of her love for Hippolytus, confirm me in it, and I shall prove my point with some arguments which I hold to be just.

In the second act, during the remarkable scene of the meeting that Phædra has with Hippolytus, I make my appearance with an unsteady step while pushed on and encouraged by my nurse, Œnone, to recommend to her my child. But I am of the opinion that that was only a simple pretext to scrutinise the heart of Hippolytus. Otherwise fearing, as Phædra would, the irresistible ascendency of the one she loved so much, she would shun every opportunity of meeting him lest she betray herself. Fully convinced of this, in beginning my scene my words come slowly from my lips and with difficulty I say:

> "My lord. To your sorrows I come to join my tears.
> I come to explain to you . . . my claim for a son."

The punctuations indicate that the interruption of these words show that the poet Dall' Ongaro, the translator into Italian of this drama, was of my opinion, and the author confirms it in part, in the following:

Phædra. "When you hate me, I should not complain of it,
My lord. You have seen me strive to hurt you;
Into the bottom of my heart you could not read.
To your enmity I've taken pains to recommend myself.
To the shores which I inhabit I would not suffer you to come.
In public, in secret against you proclaiming,
I have wished to be separated by the seas;
And I have even prevented by an express law,
If however by the offence they measure the pain,
If hate can alone attract your hate,
Never woman was more worthy of pity,
And less worthy, my lord, of your enmity."

These last four lines are certainly not from a woman who wishes to conceal her true feelings; on the contrary with a method of words and of phrases of double meaning, Phædra prepares herself to make their true signification understood. As I have already said, being imbued with

this opinion, I found that I had to pronounce the words with a double intonation, with ill-repressed rays of fire, that I had to accentuate them not only with the voice, but also with my looks, forcing myself to repress in my chest the passion which was devouring me and which was about to reveal itself. With some slight gestures, and a counter-scene, I would let the public notice the extent of my grief at not being understood by Hippolytus. When the latter believing that Phædra hates him is trying to excuse her behaviour, saying that any other mother would have acted so toward a stepson, I feel that the resolutions I have made are about to weaken; yet, without entirely revealing myself, I endeavour again to convey my meaning, saying in a light, impatient tone of voice:

Phædra. "Ah; my lord, I dare here attest, that heaven
From this common law has been willing to except me!
It is a case very different that troubles me."

As the scene gradually progresses, being no longer able to repress the passion which excites me, the violence of my furious ardour overflows like a swollen torrent which floods over its banks. The voice, the gestures and the accents express the state of a woman, who, crazy with love, casts aside modesty, dignity and all in order to obtain the satisfaction which her guilty passion causes her to desire.

Then seeing myself despised, with the quickness of lightning I pick up the poignard that Hippolytus has let fall, when with an impulse of repugnance and disdain he has hurled himself upon me to kill me, and I point it to my chest to stab myself. At that moment Œnone, who during that scene had been listening unseen, throws herself upon me, grasping my arm, which she cannot however disarm, and drags me by force to my rooms.

This most exciting scene with Hippolytus presents great difficulties for the actress, because if it should be at all overdone the audience would find the situation most revolting and its effect would be spoiled.

In the first scene between Phædra and Œnone in the third act, there is nothing but a continuous portrayal

of mutual expressions of remorse, rage, hope, fear, illusions and contrary proposals.

At times the humiliation that Hippolytus inflicts upon her causes him to become hideous to her; at times she excuses him and accuses herself for having judged with too much severity an inexperienced youth ignorant of the laws of love. In this perplexity she tries to reenter his heart, using Œnone as a go-between.

But when the faithful nurse announces in dismay that Theseus is still alive and that he is about to reappear, with a rapid change I assume the attitude of one struck by a great surprise and stunned by it. With an indistinct voice, almost murmuring I say:

Phædra: "... My husband is living, Œnone, it is enough.
I have made the unworthy confession of a love which outrages him;
He lives, and I wish not to know more."

The words—"I wish not to know more"—I speak as if they meant: "It is the end of all for me."

From that point, the thought of finding myself in the presence of the outraged husband, incapable owing to my shame of standing before him, terror begins to take hold of me. I become delirious, everything around me seems as if would take life in order to reveal to Theseus my guilt.

This manifestation of an almost total state of abasement renders possible the consent that Phædra gives regarding the infernal plot that Œnone proposes to her and I succeed in portraying it by showing myself overcome by a dreadful fright, which, at the approach of both Theseus and Hippolytus, takes possession of me. That flash of the reawakening of my honest nature, appears to be put out. Finding it absolutely impossible to meet my husband, I address a few lines to him which express my profound grief.

Feeling abashed and not finding strength enough for other words I leave the stage rapidly.

The fourth act of this tragedy is a majestic one, revealing all the transcendent genius of Racine. Certainly he did not find his inspiration either in Euripides or in Seneca for the structure of this striking part of his classic

work. It is moulded as Shakespeare would have done it. The human heart is nakedly exposed, and all the torture of its rearrangements exhibited.

When Phædra repenting and tormented by remorse comes trembling to meet Theseus in order to implore clemency for the son, and also to reveal the falsehood hurled at Hippolytus, one can plainly read in my face and in the way I enunciate my words what an effort, what a struggle I have undergone in order to bring myself to take such a step.

I say my first lines in a beseeching tone while entering the stage, my eyes lowered, not having the courage to meet the wrath of my husband by confessing the truth,

On hearing from Theseus that Hippolytus has "dared to outrage the fame of Phædra and call her false," I bend my head lower, humiliated and confused to the extent of wishing to hide my shame under the earth. But when I hear that "Aricia alone was the woman that Hippolytus would openly confess to love, and who possessed both his love and faith," so complete a transformation comes over my appearance that the spectator is amazed. I no longer listen to Theseus; I have become insensible to all he has to say against my son, so entirely overcome am I with the tremendous revelation which has struck me. Remaining alone, I gradually give vent to the fury repressed until that point. Then slowly and with the most bitter tone of scorn, gradually raising my voice, I pronounce the following stupendous lines, in which are thrown all the sufferings of a heart which is torn.

Here they are:

"Aricia has his heart! Aricia has his faith!
Ah! Gods! when to my wishes the inexorable ingrate
Armed himself with an eye so proud, a countenance so dreadful,
I thought against love his heart was always closed,
And was against all my sex equally armed;
Another, however, has bent his audacity;
Before his cruel eyes another has found grace. . . "

But again my mood changes and an outburst of despairing fury seizes me, when I exclaim:

" I am the only object he cannot hear."

And not being able any longer to place any bounds upon my impetuous rage, I rove around the stage like a lunatic. On seeing Œnone I run to make her acquainted with what I had learned.

With a savage rage I evoke, one by one, all my recollections, fears, anxieties, my suffered torments, to show that all else was nothing in comparison with the tremendous grief at that moment tearing my heart.

My mind being upset by the venom of jealousy, I only could see before me the image of my preferred rival, jubilant in the sweet embraces of Hippolytus! . . . The joy of those two that I imagined I saw seemed to kill me. Their happiness was unbearable to me. The thought of revenge would flash through my mind. . . I would charge Œnone to go and kill Aricia. No! I wanted to kill her myself. Hearing nothing but the voice of jealousy, I would think of inciting my husband to some kind of torment for my rival, stirring up hatred against the whole tribe to which he belonged. Returning to my senses for an instant, I was forced to meditate over my own guilt, the enormity of which would make me entirely lose my mind. Crazy and staggering it seemed as if I was breathing nothing but incest, lies and the desire to plunge my hand in some innocent blood.

I could not see, I could not discern anything, being delirious I would feel myself transported to the presence of my father Minos, the Great Judge of Hell. It appeared to me that the fatal urn wherein were enclosed the decrees of the punishments inflicted upon the dead, would fall down from his hands and he would try to imagine some greater punishment for me. Seeing him throw himself upon me to kill me, I utter a cry, acting as if he had grasped me by the hair. In my contortions, in the attempt to free myself from that fatal clasp, I hold up my head in the endeavour to run away from his furious wrath and with loud cries I exclaim:

"Pardon! a cruel god has betrayed thy family;
Recognise his vengeance in the passion of thy daughter,
Alas! of the frightful crime of which shame follows me,
Never has my sorrowful heart gathered the fruit.
Even to the last sigh of pursuing evils,
I render in torment a painful life."

And I would fall heavily down fainting on the floor.

After a long pause I had arranged in order to complete the scenic effect that Œnone should kneel beside me and with pitying and persuasive words gently raise my lifeless body, lean my head upon her knees, until, gradually recovering my senses. I cast invectives on her. Hearing her say in order to lessen my fault that the Gods had committed the crime, I slowly regain my strength and move away from her. I send her away in anger and contempt, but as I pass to the other side of the stage the nurse follows me and falling at my feet embraces my knees in a beseeching manner. It is at that point that I would address to her disdainfully, in a paroxysm of fury, the famous invective which Racine has so skilfully written and which is one of the most celebrated pieces of French literature:

"I'll listen to thee no more. Away, execrable monster:
Leave to me the care of my deplorable fate.
May the just heaven pay thee worthily!
And may the punishment forever terrify
All those who like thee by cowardly dexterity,
Nourish the failings of weak princes;
Urging them to likings to which their heart incline,
And dare for crime to smooth unhappy presents
That celestial anger can make to kings."

The fifth act offers not many exceptionally difficult cases of interpretation to the artist. Phædra has only a brief appearance upon the scene at the end of the tragedy. She presents herself in a dying condition, devoured by the poison she has swallowed to put an end to her heartrending remorse for the fault committed in a moment of fatal excitement.

With a subdued voice I reveal to my husband my incestuous passion, the false accusation of the attempted seduction of Hippolytus. I am eaten up by the fatal beverage I have taken and my words come gradually more and more indistinctly from my lips. In an agonising state I am laid upon my chair and expire resting my body in abandon and half recumbent in the arms of one of my maids, while the other maids kneel around me in an attitude of profound grief and religious respect.

APPENDIX

OF

BIOGRAPHICAL REMINISCENCES

BY L. D. VENTURA

BIOGRAPHICAL REMINISCENCES

By L. D. Ventura

Adelaide Ristori was born on the 29th of January, 1822, at Cividale, in Friuli, where her father and mother, Antonio Ristori and Maddalena Pomatelli, chanced to be with the Covicchi travelling company. But if children belong to the country of their parents her native town was Ferrara, the noble city where the first Italian Theatre was erected, and where also was born Vittoria Piissimi, a celebrated actress of the XVI Century, pronounced "divine" by Garzoni. He would have said the same of Ristori had he lived three centuries later. Her parents, obscure, inferior mummers, had no qualifications for teaching Adelaide, and they had five other children to care for—three boys, Henri, Cæsar, August, and two girls, Caroline, who became the wife of Pasquale Tessero, and Annetta married to a Trojani of Rome. All of these with the exception of August, who was at his death a major in the Italian army, embraced the dramatic career, but without success. The father, though a good man, was a poor actor, and had very little intelligence. Once when leaving Cologne, Adelaide caught him carrying an enormous quantity of quart bottles. "Papa," she asked, "what is in those bottles?" "You ought to know," he answered with importance: "Cologne water."

"But where did you get it?"

"Well," said he candidly, "from the place where other people take it, the fountain on the Square."

Adelaide made her début at the age of two months in "The New Year's Presents," by Count Giraud. At the age of five, still in the Covicchi Company, she created much enthusiasm, playing the important part of the Pitocchetto (Little Beggar) in the comedy of that name.

At fourteen, in the Moncalvo Company, she dared to interpret and with great success Pellico's "Francesca da

Rimini," though she had never heard Marchionni who created the part. At fifteen, in the year 1837, she was received into the Royal Compagnia Sarda where within three years, like a military man who in time of war advances easily from sergeant to captain, from secondary rank she became leading lady. The illustrious names of that company were: Carlotta Marchionni, Amalia Bettini, Antonio Ribotti, Vestri, Righetti, Gottardi. In leaving it Adelaide entered the Compagnia Ducale of Parma, managed by Romualdo Mascherpa, and afterward Luigi Domeniconi's company. In this successive environment of great artists she was able to study them and to assimilate what her judgment pointed out to be the best, though the diction and declamation of Marchionni, marked by a great detachment of syllables and a continual hammering, had nothing to do with hers. Nor can Ristori be compared with Internari who, although a distinguished tragedienne, lacked absolutely that grace and sweetness which so often emanated from Ristori's acting, like the perfume from a flower. In a word, Ristori had no masters but herself. Hers was a spontaneous art, impulsive, the fruit of the keenest intuition.

In his "Dictionary of Actors" Luigi Rasi throws light on old theatrical methods in Europe. He tells of a contract between Adelaide Ristori as leading lady at twenty-two and Righetti the manager of the Italian Royal Company. One of its clauses was that Ristori had the right to select her parts and to refuse any play of immoral character. This explains her ascendency, her supremacy, and her life.

For seventy-five years, that is to say since 1780, Italian players had not been in France nor elsewhere abroad, except for the passing and short appearance of Carlotta Internari between 1830 and 1831. She landed in Paris at a bad moment for the Revolution of July burst out and she was able only once to show her ability, in Alfieri's "Rosamunda." It was therefore a difficult undertaking to destroy the idea formed in France that our dramatic art was buried. Great actors, well known in Italy, had never gone beyond our boundaries, and nobody knew or spoke of them abroad; but Adelaide Ristori,

having reached the maturity of her high talent and of her enchanting art, felt well prepared for the battle. Everything was in her favour: her form handsome and full of plastic grace; her face gentle yet majestic, quick to reflect every emotion; her voice harmonious and sonorous, flexible to the whole gamut of passion, from the blandest sweetness to the most harsh utterance of disdain, hatred, or anger. Besides, her recent social rise to a patrician position gave opportunity for instantaneous success, and even in the exclusive theatrical field the moment was propitious. Élisa Félix, known as Rachel—a contemporary of Ristori, born only eleven months before her—was then the absolute queen of the French stage, but she had angered and disappointed the Parisians by deserting the "House of Molière" for an engagement offered to her by an American manager. The Parisians, as later they used Madame Duse as an instrument to crush the eccentric Sarah Bernhardt, made use of the advent of Ristori to impart a lesson to Rachel.

Besides Ernesto Rossi she had as fellow-artists her sister Caroline, her brother-in-law P. Tessero, Gaetano Gattinelli, Luigi Bellotti-Bon, Pietro Boccomini, Giammaria Borghi, and others. She produced "Aux Italiens," Alfieri's "Myrrha," Goldoni's "Locandiera," Pellico's "Francesca da Rimini," and soared at once amongst the stars.

Jules Janin, the bulldog of French criticism, in his unalterable Chauvinism could only criticise her in this characteristic phrase: "She lacks nothing but to be a Frenchwoman."

Lamartine, Dumas *père*, Legouvé all burned their choicest incense at her altar. The battle was won. From that moment, like a world conqueror she went from land to land. Spain, Holland, Portugal, Germany, England, Greece, Brazil, Turkey, Argentine, Egypt, North America—she conquered the world with her wingéd genius. It was she and she alone who inaugurated a new era in the history of Italian dramatic art, thus clearing the path for Salvini, Rossi, Emanuel, Zacconi, Duse, Pezzana, Di Lorenzo, Reiter, and Ermete Novelli.

In 1856, when she returned to Paris, as she often did

for several years afterward, Rachel's animosity was increased on account of Legouvé's "Medea." The great French actress had formally accepted this tragedy for the Théâtre Français but at the moment of rehearsal, through caprice and arrogance refused to produce it, one of her pretexts being that it lacked classicism, for it was two acts shorter than the canons commanded. In spite of his good nature Legouvé appealed to the courts and won, so that Rachel had to pay $30,000 damages. This amount Legouvé turned over to the "Society of Men of Letters and Dramatic Authors." This embittered Rachel, but the matter did not end there, for Legouvé gave his tragedy to Ristori to read. She found it suited her and asked Professor Giuseppe Montanelli to translate it for her. She produced it and won an immense success. It was at that moment that the author in gratitude wrote in her album: "*Rachel m'a tué: qui m'a fait revivre? Toi!*"

. . . Rachel was enraged. When she came back from her American tour she retired from the stage though only thirty-seven years old and, undermined by consumption if not by a broken heart, she died in her villa of Cannet near Toulon. There is a tradition that, between 1851 and 1852, Rachel in one of her excursions abroad, landed in Italy and went to Verona where she played "Adrienne Lecouvreur," written especially for her by Legouvé and Scribe in 1849. She starred in one theatre while Ristori was playing the same play in another, and the crowd which went to hear Ristori far outnumbered Rachel's audience. We, who were born when already the great tragedienne was at the close of her career, seek in vain in the immobile features of a portrait or in the pages of the most careful biography the beauty *in action* of Ristori's face and form, beauty which no brush of painter or tool of sculptor is able to reproduce, but which those who were contemporaneous have seen.

Amongst these was Legouvé, who writes a homesick eulogy full of poetry bearing the faint perfume of a dried flower between the pages of an old album:

"Ristori! I see her still! When she came to Paris she was thirty-four years old. Tall, of magnificent proportions, hair of chestnut colour. I was immediately struck

with the sovereign beauty of her eyes. And what eyes! I only saw their equal in Talma and in Malibran. You remember in Virgil—*natantia lumina somno*, eyes wandering in their sleep. They were liquid when their glance darted soft and luminous like a ray of sunshine across a cloud. But under the stress of passion, when that cloud gave place to fire in the pupil, what lightnings! Her voice had a surprisingly great range, velvety, caressing, profound; it made shivers either of joy or terror run over the spine."

After reading that yellowed letter one feels the sincerity which is embodied in a telegram from the same Legouvé to Ristori in 1902: "I was born in 1807. Only that date can prevent me from coming to Rome for your celebration."

At that time when she was receiving the world's sincere homage the French Ambassador, Barrère, visited her in her palace, and the talk turned on Legouvé . . . . "How much our great poet would give, Marquise," said the Ambassador, "to be able to hear once more a verse of 'Medea' given by you!"

"He shall have that pleasure done in a way he will never forget," answered the artist.

"But how?"

"That will be between him and me," added the aged Marquise. "I must go before long to Turin where there is a telephone to Paris and it will be by telephone that I will recite to my favourite author a verse of the sublime tragedy to which I owe the greatest triumph of my life. He is ninety-five years old; I am eighty. Neither of us would have thought sixty years ago it would be possible to exchange at so many miles distant such an original salutation."

After the first triumphs of Ristori abroad, when she came back and played in one hundred cities of her own country, she was received with delirious applause. She was already well known and appreciated in Italy but the cause of this enthusiasm was demonstrated in the epigram dictated by Count Jacopo Sanvitale for a gold medal given her inscribed "Honour to thee who honours Italy and Art."

Everybody understood that she had been a herald and pioneer, that foreigners had bowed their knees in acknowledgment of the fact that a nation whose children showed such a mastery of art well deserved to become free and independent. The applause was interminable when in "Giuditta," written especially for her by Paolo Giacometti, Ristori declaimed the finishing hymn:

"Il mio nome ai fanciulli imparate:
Sappian essi che santa è la guerra,
Se lo stranier minaccia la terra
Che per Patria il Signore ci dié."

(Teach to the children my name:
Let them know that war is holy,
If the stranger threatens the land
Which God gave us for our country.)

When she added:

Io, Giuditta, a guidarvi verrò!
(I, Judith, will lead you!)

from the galleries the people would applaud answering: "Let it be to-morrow!" The crowd would follow her home and she was compelled to appear at her balcony again and again while they shouted "Viva the great *Italian* actress," with special stress on the word Italian. At that time Italy was divided and every pretext was used to show patriotism. This was disagreeable to the three abhorred enemies of Italian unification, the Pope, the Bourbons, and the Austrian Government, and Adelaide Ristori was watched. It seemed as if Italy was about to break her chains; the actress might snap the first link.

In a performance which she gave at the Municipal Theatre in Reggio d'Emilia on the 2d of November, 1858, the appearance of Ristori as Giuditta was awaited not only as a tribute to her art but because certain allusions in the tragedy at that time were always the occasion for patriotic demonstrations. At the moment when one of these allusions was made and the audience enthusiastic it was noticed that in a box were the members of a society called "Friendship." Under the cover of an amusement club they disseminated the most patriotic propaganda. The applause from that box was the noisiest in all the theatre. Next day their enthusiasm had not cooled.

They—twenty of them—passed the frontier and went to enroll themselves in a regiment of Piedmont. Ristori had inflamed their patriotism even more than usual.

Unlike many Italian actors, monochords who play always upon the same string maintain their own personality instead of getting into that of their characters, Ristori exhibited the greatest versatility. She passed with ease from tragedy to comedy, to drama, or even to farce.

If she was great in her classic repertoire, she was also great in the "Adrienne Lecouvreur" of Scribe and Legouvé, in the "Elizabeth of England," and "Maria Antonietta" of Giacometti, in Camoletti's "Suor Teresa," Ferrari's "Marianna," and Goldoni's "Pamela."

It has been said of her as of other great stars, she preferred poor actors to support her, but this is not true. It is useless to mention names, but the programmes testify that other stars played with Ristori, though none of them could stand the comparison; they paled before the sun.

The first season that Adelaide Ristori performed in Pisa, in 1845, was marked by an act of great kindness on her part. Luigi Alberti, a young man of the *jeunesse dorée* who afterward became an actor, asked Ristori to play a comedy written by him, "The Water Cure at Lucca." It was a failure. The author was so much grieved that Ristori offered to play another of his comedies. It met the same fate. "I do not wish to leave Tuscany before I force the public to endorse you," she said, and she produced yet another play, which succeeded. The Florentine public applauded the gentle perseverance of Ristori rather than the play.

To render homage to Ristori when she was electrifying the public in Venice, Quirico Filopanti made this difficult anagram upon her:

"Or si dee dir Talia."
(Now she must be called Thalia.)

And Costetti made another one:

"Ideal Riso d'Arte."
(Ideal smile of Art.)

A vein of humour was very manifest in Ristori's character. An author once wrote a drama for her and

delivered it. Ristori found that after having taken a dose of poison she had to deliver a speech too long about another person whom she had poisoned, so a telegram was sent to the author: "You forget that I too am in a hurry to die, and that I cannot speak eternally in presence of the corpse I have made; shorten the agony!" Another incident will serve to show how entirely she was mistress of herself and always far from stage fright:

It was her habit to have supper after a performance and for that function Sardelle salad must never be omitted. At Trieste the others preferred for their own delectation the Sardelle of Lissa. One evening she was reciting for the tenth time in the Theatre Armonia, now Goldoni, "Maria Antonietta" of Giacometti. The place was crowded and at every pause the public responded with delirious applause. In the last act and indeed while the Queen was hurling her famous invective against the judges and all the women were in tears, Ristori found means to get near her brother Cæsar who was playing with her and whisper to him between her most impassioned words: "I charge you not to forget that Sardelle salad!"

Adelaide Ristori had noble instincts and was not only a great artist but a perfect gentlewoman. She was a patriot from her childhood. In 1849, being in Rome with the Domeniconi Company and being compelled to discontinue her performances on account of the *état de siège*, she went on another stage: *i. e.*, the Military Hospital, to assist in nursing the wounded. On her tours about the world, while honoured by the most eminent men of all countries, even by reigning sovereigns, she was known to be so fond of Italy that statesmen intrusted her with delicate political missions of much importance; and she fulfilled these with courage, prudence, and zeal. Her kind disposition and tender heart never knew what envy meant. When she first went to France she wished to have the famous Ernesto Rossi as a member of her company, and never afterward did she refuse to play with the most illustrious artists. Her memorable first performance of "Francesca da Rimini," in 1865, on the centenary of Dante, with Rossi (Paolo), Salvini (Lanciotto), Piccinini

(Guido), would be impossible to reproduce with such a cast.

To her fellow artists in need she was always generous; even after she was disabled by age she kept in her company Giammaria Borghi, who had been with her in the Royal Campagnia Sarda. On many occasions she helped Giulio Buti, who accompanied her in every excursion abroad, and what kindness did she not show to Achille Majeroni? In 1867, he was in Florence and as usual in dire poverty, literally starving. As soon as Ristori returned from South America she learned the condition to which the great Majeroni was reduced and she engaged him immediately, paid off his indebtedness and brought him back from death to life. Thus she did with all who were in real need.

Bettoli tells of one evening at her house when Ristori and her husband and also Giulia Grisi were present and he was speaking of Felice Scifoni, the honest follower of Mazzini, friend of Montanelli, who had been for years a prisoner of the Pontifical Government at Civita Castellana, and who had no food nor shelter. Ristori listened and then changed the conversation after asking for the address of Scifoni. A few days later Bettoli again found himself at Ristori's and he saw Scifoni seated between Donna Bianca and Giorgio, the former fifteen, the latter thirteen years of age, giving them lessons in literature and history. For each lesson Ristori paid twenty francs—an enormous fee in Italy to a teacher.

Her brother Henri impoverished by the dramatic profession went into a railroad office; her brother Cæsar from a character actor became a comic basso then a teacher of elocution. Ristori had to take care of him until his death. She brought up Adelaide Tessero, the daughter of her sister Caroline, and this niece by following her teaching and advice became a famous actress in Italy. Ristori's sister Annetta had to depend on her absolutely, while Signora Carocci, the widow of Augusto Ristori, became her companion and best-loved friend.

To dramatic authors she always extended generosity, asking for their work more to help them than through any need of their plays.

Luigi Datti, from Corneto Tarquinia, wrote for her "Erminia la Cantante"; Luigi Camoletti, from Novara, "Suor Teresa Suarez." The latter play was made by her a success as great as Salvini's "Morte Civile" by Giacometti. Paolo Ferrari wrote "La Donna e lo Scettico" and "Marianna," Paolo Somma gave "Cassandra," Montanelli translated "Medea" of Legouvé, and adapted "Camma" from Plutarch; and Giacometti, "Giuditta," "Maria Antonietta," "Renata di Francia." To Giacometti for each play she gave 1,600 francs.

At the long course of performances she gave at Florence in 1867, the crowds were so great that she had to change theatres twice to accommodate them and it is told that in "Maria Antonietta" the people became so wrought up with emotion at the climax, when the unhappy Queen tries to resist as they take her son from her when she is going to the guillotine, that they burst into hysterical weeping.

During that time Ristori tried to produce some novelties, and therefore ordered some plays from Giacometti, Castelvecchio (Count Giulio Pullé), and Bettoli. Giacometti wrote "La Donna e la Civetta," Castelvecchio "Un Fiore," Bettoli "Lavinia,"—all failures but nevertheless the actress not only paid what she had agreed but more, excusing herself by saying: "We need some compensation since the public has been deaf."

The following is a list of the plays in which Ristori shone:

Francesca da Rimini,	by	Silvio Pellico
La Locandiera,	"	Carlo Goldoni
Le gelosie di Zelinda Lindoro,	"	" "
Sposa Sagace,	"	" "
Pamela,	"	" "
Myrrha,	"	Vittorio Alfieri
La Suonatrice d'Arpa,	"	Davide Chiossone
Mary Stuart,	"	Frederich Schiller
Pia dei Tolomei,	"	Carlo Marenco
Phædra,	"	Cornelius Racine
Medea,	"	E. Legouvé
Rosamunda,	"	Vittorio Alfieri
Macbeth,	"	Wm. Shakespeare
Lucrezia Borgia,	"	Victor Hugo
Maria Antonietta,	"	Paolo Giacometti
Camma,	"	Giuseppe Montanelli
Adrienne Lecouvreur,	"	Legouvé and Scribe

Giuditta,	by	Paolo Giacometti
Bianca Maria Visconti,	"	" "
Didone Abbandonata,	"	Pietro Metastasio
Prosa,	"	Paolo Ferrari
Beatrice,	"	E. Levouvé
Cuore ed Arte,	"	Leone Fortis
La Donna e lo Scettico,	"	Paolo Ferrari
Marianna,	"	" "
Debora,	"	Jacopo Mosenthal

Her personal letters to me give an idea of her busy life and its varied interests:

"PARIS, 26th September, 1885.

"*My dear Friend:*

"In acknowledging your last affectionate letters I come with clasped hands to beg pardon for my delay in answering. But in short, I will tell you the reason, which is the same that has prevented me from reading your 'Peppino,' in spite of the great desire which I have to do so.

"You ask of me my memoirs—Great Heavens! Who does not write memoirs nowadays? And if they do not contain sensational facts and events their failure is complete. What frightens me is what the people say when a book is advertised as the memoirs of Tom, Dick, or Harry! 'Oh, fine things!' that one will say (I hear the saying and the laugh repeated). 'Here we are!' exclaims another. Certainly in my memoirs I might have rather interesting things to tell, but as these are related to persons, some of whom are still living and prominent either in politics or otherwise, I might offend the pride of a kind nation, nor would it be decent nor delicate on my part to dull in any way the memory of those who are dead. Instead, I am writing something else which seems to me more appropriate, although it may cost me more trouble in the putting together.

"You speak to me of coming back to America, of establishing in Boston a Dramatic School of Acting, leaving me to guess the satisfactory profit I should derive from it. You with the soul of an artist in proposing this to me know that you speak *to* the soul of an artist, and you propose to that soul what might be its greatest

ambition, but in your enthusiasm you have forgotten three people, and my social position! My husband, my children . . . and the rest! A mere bagatelle, as you are aware. Now having children to settle in life, having a social position to sustain, how can you imagine that I could take them away from their fatherland for three years, dedicating myself solely to the life of an artist, renouncing all else? And our relations, and the Roman society, what would they say? The very idea of it would make those at home laugh as though I were fit for a madhouse. Judge then if I spoke seriously. Open earth!

"If I were absolutely dependent on my profession, through necessity the family might be obliged to submit to such a sacrifice of pride, habits, and affection; but this not being the case, any alluring, artistic perspective has no strength nor value for one like me who has made art out of one of the integral parts of her life.

"Understand me without more words; you have my most cordial thanks for the interest you have in me and my art, and we will not again refer to the subject.

"Pay no attention to the many corrections on the previous page, for, though done purposely, this morning I have not had a moment's peace to rewrite; pass over the form and interest yourself in the substance alone.

"In a few words I will tell you what I am doing. I have thought that it would be interesting to give my views on the interpretation of six of my different rôles, namely: 'Lady Macbeth, 'Myrrha,' by Alfieri, 'Phædra,' by Racine (by way of contrast), 'Elizabeth of England,' and 'Mary Stuart' (always by contrast of character), and Legouvé's 'Medea.' Already I have finished the first four; I am now at Stuart. I tell why I represented those personages as I did, the physical causes, also the moral ones. I compare the different ways in which they were conceived by the great ancient masters, Seneca and Euripides, and have shown how Racine used their ideas in order that his 'Phædra' might be more appreciated.

"My essay on 'Lady Macbeth' has cost me a great deal of labour to evolve in penetrating to its meanings and evolving the causes which produced the legitimate effects indicated by the author.

"The comparison between 'Myrrha' and 'Phædra' has also been difficult. The first is a pure virgin, a victim of destiny, but the second, knowing the abominable consequences certain to ensue from her fatal passion, cannot resist the intoxication of love and throws herself into it headlong, regardless of all else. The rest proceeds from this idea.

"My intention is to have the book published in England with Italian quotations and original text, and *vice versa* in Italy; in France with quotations in the different languages, according to the nature of the composition; in Italy with French or English text as the case may be, at the bottom of the page; perhaps in Germany the same. What do you think of my idea? It may be useful to artists and arouse general interest, but would appeal chiefly to authors and to amateurs. Do you believe that this book would receive a welcome in the United States if I had it published there in English? Would the sale be profitable? Curiosity might help it, since it would bear my name. What is your opinion of the publishers of Boston? What are their conditions? Answer me point by point all these questions thoughtfully, practically, without letting yourself be influenced either by the Italian *élan*, or by the friendship which you have for me, or by artistic instinct.

"I shall remain in Paris until the 10th of November, then we will go to Rome to plant our roots for a new summer. We have spent the summer months very pleasantly between St. Moritz, Lake of Como, Lucerne, and Alsace, where our friends have a magnificent castle. The change of air has done me and my children a great deal of good and the medical treatment has helped my husband. We are all very well.

"In Paris there is nothing new, except that poverty grows, and people fared better when they fared worse! Nobody knows how it will end. As soon as the work on my essay is finished I will read your little book.

"Take better care of your health. Write me soon. My regards to the Rotoli's, a little kiss to the dear she-cat—no, no, he-cat, Ristoro's son.

"Many thanks for her kind remembrance to Mrs. Clement.

"My husband, Georgio and Trojani salute you, as does Bianca with me very cordially, and consider me always your friend, ADELAIDE RISTORI DEL GRILLO."

"76 VIA MONTERONE, ROME, 26th April, 1886.

"*My very dear Friend:*

"I shall not excuse my silence by saying that letters which I wrote you must have been lost on the *Oregon*—it would be too vulgar. I have not written because I have not been able. Many times I had the desire to write but you cannot imagine how much the publication of my book occupies and preoccupies me. I get crazy with the English translation because I wish it to express what *I* mean to say and not to vent the British ideas. I have to compare it with the French edition before passing it to the copyist: I correct here and there what I have written in my Artistic Studies, and in my Memoirs . . . . Add to this the cares of a family, the boring duties to society and, as if that were not enough, an accursed fluxion in the eyes, and then condemn me for my silence if you have the heart.

"Do not believe that I have not thought of the Biographies of Marini, Tessero, and Duse which you asked me for. The first two informed me that they had none (proof of their carelessness!) I do not remember what answer Duse gave me, but yesterday I wrote to her on the subject again and will send you her answer.

"Costetti has only published one volume, entitled 'The Living Men of the Italian Stage who are Forgotten.' This little book—well known to me—I send to-morrow, and will ask if there are others. But beware, for they say Costetti is a *jettatore*. I don't know if it is true; people say so!

"On the matter of the book I think I have spoken to you at length. At any rate I enclose a little paragraph they have sent me from Venice. Many other papers have spoken of it. This notice has been reproduced in English, German, Portuguese, and Spanish papers. The Italian publisher said to me as soon as he saw my manuscript

that it might be 320 pages of print in octavo. Each essay will be preceded by a picture of me in the costume of the character I represent, and on the first page will be printed another picture of me in ordinary dress, in all seven pictures.

"There will be six essays, but the ones on Mary Stuart and Elizabeth are to be preceded by two historical preambles giving an account of the causes which have inspired in me sympathy or antipathy. In the essays upon Myrrha, Mary Stuart, Elizabeth, and Medea there are many biographical sketches of a certain interest.

"I have interrupted this poor letter I know not how many times; I hope that I have not made of it a *paté*.

"We will not leave Rome before the middle of July. Bianca, Giorgio and I to St. Moritz: Giulian to Neubad. In September we go to Paris.

"We are all well and hope that you are also. Are you not coming for a vacation in Italy? Has Salvini really made good business in America this last season? His performances with Booth must have been very successful, I imagine.

"Is Rotoli still satisfied with Boston?

"Write me, and at length. Be always a constant friend, as is to you,

Yours,

ADELAIDE RISTORI DEL GRILLO.

"P. S. Many salutations from my family."

"CASTELLAMARE, 19th August, 1889.

"*Dear Friend;*

"I send this letter to your old address in Boston hoping by chance it may still find you there.

"For the last six months I have gone through a world of sorrow. First, the illness of my husband, then the very painful illness of my poor brother-in-law—Trojani—which ended in death. This has grieved all of us, for he was everything to us, as we were everything to him in this world. I have not left him till the moment I laid him down in the coffin covered with flowers, and beside him I put a souvenir of mine. Since that death my husband

has grown worse and worse; his nerves give him no rest, and, unfortunately, he has hurt one of his feet, making two sores not yet healed. Meanwhile, my brother-in-law, Pio Capranica has fallen ill. You know he is the head of the family, and you may imagine how Giuliano feels! Finally, seeing how much the air and the excessive heat enfeebled Pio, the doctors have decided to send him to a more bracing climate. Escorted by the Doctor and by the children—who are two examples of filial love—he left for St. Moritz, where he arrived by short journeys and now the news from him is very encouraging. My children insisted that I should come here to recuperate from these great emotions and fatigues, but on the 21st I shall join them.

"I come now to the motive of this letter. Elena Varesi, the daughter of the celebrated baritone, herself one of the best lyric prima donnas—after many indispositions can no longer continue her career and she has decided to go to America to give lessons. With her wonderful singing method it is impossible for her not to succeed in making good pupils. She will start for Chicago the 1st of September. Some friends in that city have advised her to go there, and they would get her a professorship in the Conservatory. She desires to make some distinguished acquaintances. Elena is a charming young lady, of something more than thirty years, and she has travelled a good deal in South America. She asks of me introductions, but I, in the very short time that I played in Chicago, had other things to do besides making acquaintances. Warmly then, I beg you to procure me among the many kind acquaintances you have made some recommendations in behalf of Varesi. I will give her your address so that she may send you hers, and you can send her the letters. I have written to Rotoli also on the subject: he knows her well. Please do what you can for her.

"When you answer, address letters to Paris,
48 Boul. Malesherbes.

"With a warm grasp of the hand,
Yours,
RISTORI."

"ROME, January 16, 1894.

"*My dear Friend:*

"Knowing my character and my way of doing, I hope you have not judged my silence as unnatural. In fact for a long time, on account of an accursed poison mushroom, I have suffered with my stomach.

"I have a pile of letters waiting on my desk to which I must attend later. Imagine then if I am not able to write long letters how can I dedicate myself to write such an article as you ask from me for the *Atlantic Monthly.* Your news grieves me. I wish very much it were better. With your talents you surely deserve a better fate. Do not believe, however, that by coming back to our beautiful country at this difficult time through which we are passing, with no appearance of an early change, better things would fall to your lot. We have so many vipers devouring the flesh of our beautiful Italy! How will it end? God knows, but man cannot prophesy. The truth is that we are all in agitation, thanks to the clique of money-makers and of anarchists, real traitors to their country, who leave no stone unturned to destroy order and to ferment the weak-minded to lead us on to anarchy. I assure you that honest people suffer as from an illness. But let us leave so much sadness and speak of things which will bring a smile to your lips; I mean your wife and child. The first has a good and gentle physiognomy and her expression pleases me very much—bravo! you have waited long, but you seem to have chosen well; many salutations to Madame. To the little one, who indeed seems, as we say in Roman parlance, a fine little fat pig, give many kisses; her puffy cheeks do not seem to fear becoming flaccid easily. Well, for your first production you have succeeded well. My children are always models of filial love, and much sought after in society. I wish Giorgio would marry. Let us hope. Bianca does not show any inclination for it, though (and it is not maternal pride) I assure you when she enters a room she is admired by men and women as a star.

"George, besides taking care of the business . . . (*who* has not need to nowadays) goes on painting and abhors idleness. The same can be said of Bianca. Both

bestow on me a great deal of care and attention. It is pathetic. God has wished to compensate me for the cruel loss of my husband, although the wound will never heal!

"Let us gossip for distraction. Is it true that Tommaso Salvini went to New York, invited by many gentlemen to honour the memory of poor Booth, and that he delivered a eulogy on all his virtues, such as the generosity of the dead actor, and that he received extraordinary ovations? Let us not speak of the humbug written to-day in Florentine and Neapolitan papers. The epithet 'famous' is scorned by the one who knows what a struggle he had to go through to deserve it. Your striking toilettes, the face of a cunning little soubrette, the friendship of the most noisy newspaper men, a way of reciting by jumps and convulsions, and a great deal of hysterics, christen you as a model and leader in dramatic art. Understand, I don't say this of Duse who really has a great deal of talent, but she is not guiltless of those defects which I have pointed out to her and which in my opinion do not give to her the right to celebrity! The generation of to-day regards as mythological the events of thirty years ago so much descanted upon! What is to be done? To change the world is now impossible. I still recognise all the faults of the French nation, yet I cannot minimise the honour due to her in matters of art. If in Italy there is advertised the production of a tragedy, everybody cries out that we are going back to our grandfathers' times: while if you go to Paris to see 'Œdipus Rex,' or 'Antigone,' the theatre is filled like an egg. At home if even Salvini or Rossi would try to revive tragedies nobody would go.

"I saw in Paris Mounet Sully and Mlle. Bartet in 'Antigone,' and although Mounet has all the academic French diction, you find always in him the conscientious, intelligent, delicate artist who worships his art. With him was a true jewel, Mlle. Bartet; moderate in her gestures, emotional but not effusive, an ideal. What a divine evening I spent at the Français! Mounet Sully opens this evening in Milan at the Teatro Filo-Dramatico. I am very sorry, because I am sure that, having selected

a very bad moment for coming to Italy, he will not have the success which he deserves. Moreover, he who was a very handsome man with magnificent eyes, having had the misfortune to lose in two days two dear sons, cried so much that his eyes were affected to such an extent that one of them had to be taken out of the socket to be treated and then replaced. The consequence is that he has become cross-eyed; which makes for him a great difference on the stage.

"Tender, sweet, and natural feelings are called sentimentalism rose-watered! 'Tis not true.

"I finish, and you ought to be satisfied. But remember not to accustom yourself to these long letters.

"I hold the hands of all three of you, wishing to you all the good which I hope you wish me.

"ADELAIDE RISTORI DEL GRILLO."

On the 10th of December, 1885, she wrote:

"My book is a great occupation to me. I am compelled to write a kind of biographical preface and to insert many letters of illustrious men, while giving some touches, very light, on art. This is a very difficult thing for me to do as I do not wish to annoy my reader with theories and it is not easy to speak of oneself without appearing vain. Vanity is a sin which I have never had, and I don't want it to peep out now."

It was natural with Ristori to be on the stage. Born of strolling players, she fulfilled her mission with simplicity, although with uncommon gifts. She belonged to the clan of actors like Modena, Salvini, Talma, Booth, who thought that vice was not to be portrayed, but since tragedy was unavoidable it belonged to the stage as a reflection of life.

Consequently she had no tricks in her art, no artificiality. Presence, facial expression, voice, ideals, virtues, keen intuition, exuberance of feeling, high-level wisdom, inspiration from whatever was spontaneous and human in nature; behold the gifts which enabled her to portray types which are accepted as classic and not perishable!

In Ristori's art the same quality exists as in the liter-

ature of Homer, Ossian, Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Molière, Hugo—truth eternal in life, hence on the stage.

To the last moment she frequented the theatre and never lost interest, or hope in its final triumph; but she was very slow to pass judgment or even criticism on modern actors, unless carried away by enthusiasm and admiration. She said of Ermete Novelli:

"Yes, he is a great artist but he must not believe that he can ever reach to the proportions and to the celebrity of Tommaso Salvini."

In a letter dated October 1, 1893, she says:

"Art was my second life after my family love, and I am still happy when I can discourse on that subject with some intelligent being. But the art I speak of is that of my own time—as it was understood by us, the missionary one, not this art of modern tendencies, based on neurosis and verily *a tout prix*. I have the same opinion you have on Sarah Bernhardt, but we must agree that she has great talent and great artistic perspicacity. Now she has deteriorated in the exposition of her qualities . . . but at the climax she has a wonderful supremacy of idea, not to be equalled by anyone. Duse has talent, and is unique after Bernhardt in *fin de siècle* methods. She is more human, however. Her facial mobility and absence of artificiality are gifts, yet art like hers will die. Beware! I am extremely fond of her and know her well, which has not prevented me from telling her what I am telling you. If she is reluctant at being interviewed in America it is due, in my belief, to the horror she has of misconstruction, for she cannot speak English at all. Duse is no humbug!"

Eleanora Duse has said and written of her:

"Adelaide Ristori, perfection in art, perfection in life."

In this competition for generosity and gentleness it may be opportune to quote the address to Ristori by Ermete Novelli who with Zacconi and Gustavo Salvini form the triad of unsurpassed dramatic stars now at their zenith of the Italian stage:

"Christopher Columbus discovered America: what a beautiful accident! But who was it who discovered real art to the Americans, at a time when to cross the ocean

MME. SARAH BERNHARDT

meant to make one's will? Ristori. Hurrah then! Let us call her the Columbus of Italian Dramatic Art."

While I was in Boston delivering my annual course of Italian readings to a class named the "Adelaide Ristori," which used to meet at the home of Mrs. Jack Gardner in Beacon Street, Ristori always attended during her engagements, and stayed to luncheon. Like Sarah Bernhardt for French, Ristori gave a great impulse to the study of Italian in the United States.

In a conversation with Adelaide Ristori I asked why she used glasses for reading. "I like the compliment of that question," she answered. "My sight became feeble after several continuous performances of 'Macbeth.' In the sleep-walking scene for twenty minutes I had to keep my eyes wide-open rivetted on one point, with the glare of the footlights before me. After the performance tears would constantly flow from my poor eyes and this brought on their present condition."

When Dumas *fils* died Ristori, who knew that I had been honoured with the great French dramatist's friendship, wrote January 8, 1896:

"What a loss the death of our Dumas! Only bastards in letters, so called innovators, *fin de siècle*, as I call them, could have proclaimed Dumas's death as a gain to art! Stupid, ridiculous! Had he written but 'L'Ami des Femmes,' it would have been enough glory. The new French apostles are killing all ideals: they lack resources but in excess of immorality: and yet there are scintillations. . . . Wonder of wonders to me Bornier's 'Fils de l'Aretin.' My whole heart and life have been lifted for two hours. There would be no happiness in life if not intervalled by shadows."

I wish I could reproduce here fragments of Ristori's letters concerning Zola's grandeur and Captain Picquart's* heroism during the celebrated Dreyfus case. These letters were lost in the San Francisco fire, *helas!*

After Ristori left the stage, at an opportune moment let it be said in parenthesis, she lived the comfortable and unostentatious life of a gentlewoman of refinement. She dwelt in modest and serene tranquillity in the Palazzo

* Now a General and Secretary of War of the French Cabinet.

Capranica del Grillo, 76 Via Monterone, in Rome, surrounded by a devoted family, consisting of her son, her daughter, and the charming children of the former.

Her son Giorgio, Marquis Capranica del Grillo, a painter of distinction, was a chamberlain at the court of the Dowager Queen Margherita where her daughter Donna Bianca was a lady in waiting. All Rome worshipped Ristori, and the foreigner as well as the Roman pointed at her window or gazed at her when she was seen at the theatre, as the greatest artist of Italy and of the world, as the best of women, an embodiment of dignity, rare among people who tread the boards. While her house was always open to artists and diplomats of all countries, she spent many pleasant hours in the company of the beloved widow of King Humbert I. It was after the flattering accounts she gave to Queen Margherita of America and Americans, that the Queen manifested her desire to make a visit to this country. Ristori says in a letter: "Her Majesty tells me she will never be contented or call herself acquainted with the world until she has had a glimpse of America and those good Americans, your friends of whom you are so justly fond."

Ristori wrote me April 2, 1901: "We are happy when Giorgio is in service upon the Queen. This happens three times a year. The Queen has for us an especial deference because she knows well our devotion to her and her late husband. Please tell and talk to your daughter of these things, so that she may understand what generous souls mean. . . . "

"This is not the best moment for Italy and her politics, as the daily papers witness. Fortunately our beloved, angelic Queen Margherita is adored. It would require volumes to tell of the noble deeds of this poor martyr. As soon as her son, King Victor Emanuel, reached Monza with his Queen Elena, Margherita took second place, even against the remonstrance of her son. There is no end to what I could tell you of the kind, courageous qualities of this noble soul. All worship her. When the people pass the palace they stop, hoping to catch a glimpse of her, and if she goes to take a walk in the country the peasants run after her, surround her, kneel before her.

You ought to have been in Rome when she came. I was ill and could not go out, but Bianca was there and told me the people went wild in acclaiming her. When she appeared on the balcony escorted by the King, all veiled in black, there was no applause, but clamours, howling, and tears, tears! I am weeping too just now."

In a letter dated the 3rd of August, 1900, she writes concerning King Humbert's assassination: "And now that a monster has slain the kindest King, the best-hearted man, we are plunged in the greatest sorrow; we live to weep—and they wish to abolish capital punishment! For certain crimes, mediæval punishment ought to be restored."

On the date of August 10, 1903, she writes:

"Thank the Lord, in spite of my advanced age I trot around the house quick and straight. I eat and sleep well, and when I get angry nobody is around to applaud my tragic climaxes. One would give me twenty years, and when art is on the carpet, I talk, I talk! You are right in deploring the decadence of real art. Tommaso Salvini is still the luminous star of true art. When Salvini comes to Rome to give a performance for the actors' fund, and play 'Othello,' I dress myself up and I listen to music from Heaven. There is no artificiality, but all the beauty of nature. His son Gustavo is happily his follower in ideals and methods. Wherever he goes he arouses fanaticism. He gave here two performances with his father. Gustavo played David to Tommaso's Saul. Tommaso in a blond wig, with his superb presence and that golden voice, gave the illusion of a man of thirty-five. In 'Œdipus Rex' the son is wonderful; and this is acknowledged by the father who says that he himself could not play the part so well.

"Let us not speak of 'Gioconda,' a wound to good sense. I do not deny D'Annunzio's talent, but he must stop writing for the theatre. Duse has a great talent, but she is ill, neurotic, like our century. Everything is nerves now. Novelli plays magnificently certain parts, but when he tries Salvini's repertoire there is an abyss under his feet."

On the occasion of Adelaide Ristori's eightieth birthday, the 29th of January, 1902, Gaspare De Martino, editor

of the *Proscenio* of Naples, Giuseppe Cauda, editor of the *Gazetta* of Turin, and Eduard Boutet, author of a book on Ristori, conceived the plan of giving her a public testimonial.

Their idea was taken up like a flash; all the papers spoke of it, and a committee was formed to devise the fittest way to honour Adelaide Ristori. An invitation was sent to all Italian dramatic companies to give a performance on that evening of January in memory of Ristori. The proposition was accepted. A hundred theatres—the only example in the world—gave on the same date honour to one who had been the greatest artist of her day. Special newspaper numbers were published, medals coined, especially one designed by Professor Attilio Formilli; and one in gold by Bistolfi, ordered by the Secretary of Public Instruction. That medal was stamped with a wreath of laurel, and encircled by these words: "For Adelaide Ristori, the Glory of Italian Dramatic Art and of the Italian name, on her 80th birthday, the Minister of Public Instruction offers this memorial, 2nd January, 1902."

The testimonial in Rome was given at the Teatro Valle, brilliantly illuminated. Virginia Marini and Ermete Novelli played "Esmeralda," and Tommaso Salvini made an address in the name of Italian Art. He was surrounded by artists of the "House of Goldoni," an institution of Novelli parallel with the "House of Molière." All the artists were dressed in the costumes of the time of Goldoni, with masks. Then was played Ferrari's "Goldoni e Le Sue Sedici Commedie." Salvini recited "The Last Hours of Cristoforo Colombo," by Gazzotelli, and Novelli gave a monologue "Il Guitto" ("The Barnstormer").

Paris and Cairo responded to the suggestion. It was a never-to-be-forgotten evening, which baffles description. Not less than 3,000 telegrams were delivered to the noble woman, headed by almost all the sovereigns of Europe. The Government took part and the Queen and King went to the theatre, while the King personally visited her in the morning at her residence.

An album was presented to Ristori composed of original articles by authors, artists, literary men, and friends.

The Municipal Council of Rome decreed that in all the schools of Rome the teachers should deliver a lecture in honour of Adelaide Ristori to impress upon the youth of her country the virtues and the talent of this great living figure for whom her country and her art were the only aims in life. This thought of Ristori condenses her ideal:

"Our art is the mirror, the emanation of life; the great inexhaustible rest of the soul."

In her memoirs she tells the secret of her brilliant career, and shows the spirit of her lofty aspirations. Eduard Boutet has written of her an accurate biography, and from the *Ricordo Nazionale*, published on the occasion of her eightieth birthday, we can gather anecdotes of her career as well as souvenirs of the homage bestowed on this extraordinary woman, as friend and a philanthropist.

Having received a communication that a testimonial was to be given her at that time, Ristori wrote the following letter to Tommaso Salvini:

"*Dear Salvini:*

"In writing to you as President of the Society of Dramatic Artists I intend to address the best part of them with the expression of my desires.

"I have heard that on the 29th of January—my birthday—many companies kindly wish to celebrate it by dedicating to my profit and honour the proceeds of their performances. If so, nothing would please me more than to see the collected amount applied to the benefit of the old actors who were my fellow-artists in better days. Please make public this wish of mine, and with thanks believe me affectionately yours always,

ADELAIDE RISTORI,
Marchesa Capranica del Grillo."

After her death, I offered my condolences to this friend, the greatest and last in the galaxy of contemporary artists. Salvini answered thus:

"Certainly she was not a young woman, but she was so suddenly taken away that we can hardly realise that

she had to go. She is the last ray of the sun of dramatic art which has gone. It sounds my call! First Rossi, then Ristori: and next will be my turn. And as for Ristori, for me also, it will be the commotion and talk of a day; then all will be forgotten!"

No—when an artist like Ristori dies everything is not gone and forgotten. When men like Booth, Modena and Talma die, the reflection of their private lives and the ideals which illuminated their careers, shine beyond the limited orbit of the stage and remain as lighthouses, testifying to sincerity and good work done.

On the occasion of the testimonial tendered to Ristori in 1902, Tommaso Salvini wrote this thought in the album presented to her: "It is useless to write and speak of Adelaide Ristori! This name is a beautiful and glorious page in the history of dramatic art. As a woman she commands respect; as an artist she elicits admiration; as a fellow-artist, deep affection!"

On the date of December 25, 1906, Tommaso Salvini says in a letter to me: "I am going to deliver an address to commemorate Adelaide Ristori at the Philological Club. I hope that emotion will not overcome me and stop my speech. I shall go to Rome too for this sad errand; but nowhere else; for this terrible loss has become an obsession; it reminds me of a long life spent in admiration of our art, and tells me that I am already dead."

Though nearing her eighty-fifth year Madame Ristori rose every day at nine o'clock, and would remain in her room reading the papers until eleven when she had a light breakfast. At one o'clock she used to go to the dining room with her daughter Donna Bianca to lunch and a couple of times a month, with her son Giorgio. Although retired from the stage she had a real devotion to it, kept herself well posted on all theatrical events and took great interest in new productions and in artists of merit. For two years before her death she had not "received," but to this rule she made exceptions in favour of some artists. Almost every day, late in the afternoon, she would go driving. At eight she dined with her daughter, and then retired to her room, where she talked with Donna Bianca until ten o'clock.

In winter time she went to the Teatro Valle. It was the only pastime she cared for. Besides helping dramatic artists, she liked to aid people of the nobility who were in poor circumstances, and impoverished ladies of Rome. She had a great affection for her little nephews, whom she wished to have always near her.

In Rome, at dawn on the 9th of October, 1906, serenely Adelaide Ristori passed away. For twenty days she had suffered from bronchitis, but there was no alarm felt till she grew feeble all at once. A little before dying she made her confession, though she gave no hint at the knowledge of her condition. At the last moment there were present only her daughter Marchioness Bianca, her nephew Marquis Alexander, and Doctor Cuja. Her face did not betray the least suffering. Her eyes were closed as in sleep. Her head reclining on the pillow was covered with the characteristic little cap of white lace edged with black silk which she always wore at home, and during her illness they never took it off. Her hands held a cross; many flowers were strewn over the bed.

The body was placed in a walnut coffin, between two torches resting on the velvet carpet. Two nuns prayed at the side.

On the mantelpiece, between two small Japanese lamps, stood a little statue of clay representing Adelaide Ristori as Mary Stuart. From the Capranica Palace in Via Monterone the body was carried to the Church of La Minerva, where the last rites were performed. All the Princes, the King, the Queen, Queen Margherita, the Emperor of Germany, the Press Association, T. Salvini; all the artists of Rome sent telegrams and condolences. Senators, ministers, besides her son Marquis Giorgio and her daughter Donna Bianca, attended the funeral. After the speech of the Hon. Ciuffelli, representing the Minister of Public Instruction, the body was carried to the Cemetery of Campo Verano, where it was buried temporarily. The Hon. Ciuffelli concluded his speech by saying: "The death of Ristori is the mourning of Rome and of the whole nation."

L. D. VENTURA.

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